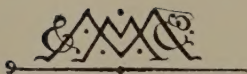


HEADLONG HALL
AND
NIGHTMARE ABBEY



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TORONTO



She often went her daily rounds through a series of deserted apartments.—P. 127

HEADLONG HALL
AND
NIGHTMARE ABBEY

BY
THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
GEORGE SAINTSBURY

ILLUSTRATED

BY
H. R. MILLAR

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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INTRODUCTION

IN the two stories which this volume contains, but especially in the first, the reader will find Peacock's peculiar art and style in a more rudimentary condition than in either of the pieces which preceded them—in a condition, indeed, which may seem almost impossibly rudimentary when they are compared with *Crotchet Castle*. But there is nothing surprising in this, and in that historic view which adds even more to the enjoyment than it does to the education of reading, it is a positive gain. When Peacock wrote *Crotchet Castle* he was a man of forty-five, who had for the last ten years seen a great deal of affairs, and something—about as much as he ever cared to see—of society. When fourteen years earlier he wrote *Headlong Hall*, though he was not an exceedingly young man, he had lived a very retired life, had had few of the usual advantages of education, and had latterly consorted with a society in which talent was indeed abundant, and genius not rare, but which included hardly any but such as Mr. Pope, fresh from 'my St. John,' and Lady Mary, was good enough to designate as 'poetical men.'

To this we must add the more commonplace but all-important fact that *Headlong Hall* was Peacock's *coup d'essai*—that he was here trying his hand at something of which no Englishman had tried exactly the like before, and which,

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though it had models, tended away from these models almost in the act of imitating them. We see more in *Headlong Hall* than in any of its followers, except *Melincourt*, the influence of those *contes* which, as has been said, were beyond almost all doubt Peacock's patterns. The discussions about perfectibilism and the rest, which though, owing to the brevity of the book, they do not oppress the reader quite so much as is the case in *Melincourt*, bear perhaps an even larger proportion to the whole bulk, are just like those we find in Marmontel's *Misanthrope Corrigé* and similar things. Nor, little as Peacock ever cared for plot, had he as yet learnt to make even so much of 'the story' as he afterwards did; while the delightful power of character-creation which he was so soon to display is hardly yet reached. The incidents of the visit to Headlong Hall are very few, and except the tumble of the father of 'the beautiful Cephalis' into the lake, and the obliging cession of the skull by the sexton to Mr. Escot, none of them can be said to have much to do with any story. The personages are mostly ticketed rather than created; even of Mr. Escot himself, who is far the most elaborate, we have less personal idea than we have of any prominent character in Peacock's novels subsequent to *Melincourt*. Sometimes, as in the case of Mr. Panscope, even the label conveys little or no meaning; and we may feel considerable difficulty in discovering why the figure is introduced, or at least why it has a part which is something more than that of a mere super allotted to it. And lastly, the catastrophe would be somewhat farcical even for a farce. The pairing off of Escot and Foster is all very well, but the follow-my-leader conduct of Headlong and Sir Patrick, and the complete indifference—a little excessive even in a descendant of 'Ap-Hurricane'—of the Squire between Tenorina and Graziosa 'do seem going far.'

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Yet the book contains lively and ample assurance of the new talent which had arisen in prose fiction : and he must have been a reviewer not up to his business, or a reader not worthy of good literary food, who did not enjoy the present and anticipate the future. For *Headlong Hall* is full of vital signs. In the first place there was the odd, quaint, vivid, satiric presentment which could not seem small in force, and must have seemed novel in fashion even to a generation which had Canning, and Sydney Smith, and Moore, and had not forgotten Peter Pindar. It must have been obvious that the writer, whoever he was (for not many could have known him) possessed in the first place very unusual and unhackneyed satirical powers, in the second a still less usual or hackneyed fashion of exerting them, and thirdly, one of the least commonplace and most promising bundles of prejudices and preferences. A satirist of the Universities, who was apparently full and fond of the classics ; a political Liberal, who was pitiless on new fads, and distinctly sceptical of schemes for amelioration ; a lampooner of the clergy for guzzling, who seemed to have at least a healthy appetite and a most formidable thirst of his own—these inconsistencies must have been more satisfactory than the most logical code or creed to the fit reader of *Headlong Hall*.

Some things which now look peculiar in the book were less strange to its first readers. The annotation (which indeed is less conspicuous in it than in *Melincourt*) had been put in fashion by various popular books, especially the *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* and the *Pursuits of Literature* ; and the selection of 'speaking' or punning names for the characters had been constant in the eighteenth century essayists. Two of Peacock's most prominent characteristics, as they were soon to be, were indeed absent. Except

Knight as Mr. Milestone no actual person is very definitely made a butt of; for the attempts to identify the chorus of reviewers with the same real persons—Gifford, Southey, and the rest—whom Peacock afterwards attacked are not, I think, very successful. But his red rags and black beasts in general—the Universities, the clergy, the profession of letters (which Peacock, though at most times he might have been said to be rather more than an irregular member of it, generally selected as a target), above all anything in the nature of a fad or craze or merely fashionable taste, such as those of which Mrs. Pinmoney was to give such a formidable list in *Melincourt*—these things, it was obvious, were likely to be buzzed about, not to say stung, rather formidably by the new satirist. And in some of the touches a tolerably acute judge might have seen what was likely to come afterwards in the way of development both of the personal and the general irony.

There was another faculty of Peacock's which showed itself almost full fledged or blown in this brief and bright little performance. The age was an age of song-writing, and not least of convivial song-writing; but assuredly it had not seen much that could vie with the admirable things here given, things, be it remembered, that the said age not merely read but cheerfully piped after its own dinners and suppers. The liability to such an intolerable infliction as Miss Mary Bennet's performance at the supper—a ball supper too—in *Pride and Prejudice* must have been made slightly less atrocious by the chance of hearing and partaking in, even over Burgundy less super-excellent than Squire Headlong's, such things as the convivial songs in *Headlong Hall*. Not that the others are bad. 'Oh! who art thou?' might be tolerable, even from lips less attractive than those of the beautiful Cephalis, though not very much can be said for

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Caprioletta's ballad. But the other three are gems. 'Sir Peter' has, I believe, been the general favourite, but it seems to me inferior to both its companions, and of those companions I cannot tell whether I like 'A heeltap, a heeltap, I never could bear it,' or the great Ap-Headlong chorus the better.

Less rare perhaps to those who first read it than to us (and the thought is likely to incline one rather to the views of Mr. Escot than to those of Mr. Foster or Mr. Jenkison) was the easy mirth of which this boisterous conviviality was only an outward and visible sign, the *joie de vivre*, the slightly indolent determination, to laugh at folly no doubt and not to connive at wrongdoing, but to take all things pretty placidly, and enjoy all that could be enjoyed with a keen, if not exactly passionate, relish. If, as has been laid down by more than one person of very different tastes, the eighteenth century was the pleasantest century of the world to live in, something of this may be thought to appear in Peacock, our last spokesman, in point of date, who has preserved the temper of the eighteenth century in regard to such things, though observing and preserving pretty amply and very accurately the successive ways and manners of the nineteenth. Here, too, in the person of Mr. Mac Laurel (who seems to be *Quarterly* in politics and *Edinburgh* in nationality) is the first butt of that peculiar objection to Scotchmen which Peacock maintained until he made an apology for it by introducing Mr. MacBorrowdale in *Gryll Grange*, with all the honours.

The transition to *Nightmare Abbey* will show very pleasantly the great advance which Peacock had made in a very short time, the omission for convenience' sake of the very much longer novel of *Melincourt*, which came between, serving to enhance the contrast. For though in the One-vote scenes

of *Melincourt* and some others, there is a considerable advance on *Headlong Hall*, and though the scheme of rather distinctly personal satire which appears in *Nightmare Abbey* had also been anticipated by the second novel, *Melincourt* is as a whole much nearer to its elder than to its younger brother. Peacock had not yet arrived at the full art of handling crazes and crotchets lightly and in passing; he still followed his French masters in loading his tales with dissertations and long speeches; and he had not yet fully attained the knack of presenting a complete if slightly and farcically drawn character.

In all these respects *Nightmare Abbey* marks a quite extraordinary improvement. It is almost the same length to a page as *Headlong Hall*, but with the rarest exceptions (there are one or two) it has no *longueurs* as the earlier book had. The scheme may still be called farcical if anybody pleases: but it is farce of the altogether good kind, the Molièresque kind, where the reality of the characters more than atones for the improbability of the incidents. The central figure is of course Scythrop; and I really hardly know which is most amusing, the delineation of Scythrop himself, or the disgusted amaze of certain Shelley-maniacs at the idea that anybody could take him for Shelley. No one else can have much doubt about the matter, and one likes both Scythrop and Shelley better for the caricature. But Scythrop would be delicious even if the world were so very unfortunate as never to have had a Shelley. And even if we knew no original, he would still have the right satiric verisimilitude which seems to be the very hardest thing to distinguish, for some readers' edification, from the exaggerated and the burlesque. Earlier, Peacock had seldom got beyond the latter, and he still shows signs of it here in Mr. Flosky, though Mr. Flosky is very amusing, in the Asterias

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couple, who are not amusing at all, and perhaps in one or two others. But the rest have crossed the line, the line impalpable, undefinable, to some it would seem undiscoverable, even when they are past it. Not merely Scythrop but his father and his two beloveds, especially Marionetta (who indeed is hardly a caricature) and Mr. Toobad, the immortal Mr. Toobad (who doubtless never existed, but who has all the qualities of potential existence, and is alive in the world of ideas if not in that of Deceitful Form) and Mr. Listless (a little nearer to the burlesque) and Mr. Larynx (the first abandonment of the repulsive type of parson, though even Dr. Portpipe is a great improvement on Dr. Gaster) and Mr. Cypress, who is quite admirable, and the servants, and all have the benefit of this new and delightful vivification. That their life has something of the dream character about it—as indeed, being lived in Nightmare Abbey, it ought to have—is no doubt true. But then the life of dreams is intensely real, though the actual incidents are profoundly extravagant.

Next to the improvement in the lifelikeness as well as liveliness of the characters must be noticed, what indeed partly results from it, the improvement in the story. It is customary to disregard if not to apologise for Peacock as a plotter: and certainly he never bestowed, or from his scheme need have bestowed, much attention on this part of the novelist's art. It has been observed that in *Headlong Hall* the novelist really has no story to tell us—a stage-coach journey, a walk, some table-talk, a ball and a marriage—that is all, with the slightest possible thread of connection between. In *Melincourt*, on the other hand, the loves of Anthelia and Forester with the intervening machination of Grovelgrub and Lord Anophel do provide something like a main plot with the One-vote

journey for a considerable episode. But it is thinly made out, and as a story hardly permits the reader to keep his eye on the links for the enormous intrusions of satire on mankind in Sir Oran Haut-ton, and political economy in Mr. Fax.

In *Nightmare Abbey*, on the other hand, the 'double arrangement,' or alas! the failure of a double arrangement between Scythrop, Marionetta, and Celinda, supplies a quite sufficient thread of interest, which is only variegated a little and not at all broken by the humours of the outsiders. I believe there has been, in Byron-worshippers, a little of the same sensitiveness on the score of Mr. Cypress which Shelley-worshippers have felt on the score of Scythrop: but the secure world need not trouble itself much about this. Of course Mr. Cypress is not the whole Byron; and of course also there are some rather illiberal strictures (of the kind to which, as has been acknowledged in the general introduction, Peacock was only too prone) both on Byron, on Scott, on the Lakists, and perhaps on others, though not on Shelley. The silliest, and as it happens, oddly enough, the worst written thing that Peacock ever wrote occurs here in the breathless and brainless outburst of spleen at Burke and Southey which figures as a note. But a certain side, and a main one too, of Byron is excellently caricatured in Mr. Cypress.

Mr. Flosky is more elaborate and therefore more amusing, though here, as always, Peacock seems either to have been unable, or not to have cared, to ascertain what his detested Lakers were really like. But this appertains rather to the discussion of *Melincourt*, and may be relegated to the introduction to that book. Of the other personages it is only necessary to say that Marionetta is really charming; that Celinda, all things being put together, deserves a rather

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less enthusiastic description ; that Mr. Toobad is as priceless as he is extravagant ; and that whether Mr. Christopher Glowry has any resemblances to Sir Timothy Shelley or not, he is an almost excessively affectionate father, and an extremely amusing person. Some of the satire on pessimist tendencies in literature has acquired in the last few years a new and not insignificant appropriateness.

The songs are better than ever ; indeed Peacock hardly surpassed them. The very dubious quality called ‘archness’—of which the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth were much enamoured, and which is unquestionably delightful at its best, but terribly likely to decline into vulgarity on the one hand and affectation on the other—has never been better exemplified than in Marionetta’s song, ‘Why are thy looks so blank, grey friar?’ I have never been able to make out whether Peacock understood and intended the enormous inferiority of the last quatrain of Mr. Cypress’s song, ‘There is a fever of the spirit’ (by general consent the finest parody ever written that is not a direct parody of one particular thing) or whether he was insensible to it. But the first twelve lines are sublime. As for the catch that follows, the same adjective and no other will suffice for it. It disputes with one or two of its own companions in Peacock’s works, and with no others, the palm of the very best of all modern drinking-songs. I have already said that I am inclined to put the final effort, the ‘Farewell to Conviviality’ of *Crotchet Castle*, ‘If I drink water while this doth last,’ a little above it ; but even this is an opinion as to which I find myself vacillating from year to year, and from day to day. Both are, I think, better, though not so very much better, than ‘The Ghosts’ of *Melincourt* and the tumultuous choruses of *Headlong Hall* ; the songs of *Maid Marian* and *The Misfortunes of Elphin* fall into a somewhat

different category. And I should not be inclined to quarrel with any one who maintained that 'Seamen Three' was the very best of all; and the most appropriate to that true vinous enthusiasm which is equally far from sottish excess and from water-toast jejuneness.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

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HEADLONG HALL

All philosophers, who find
Some favourite system to their mind,
In every point to make it fit,
Will force all nature to submit.

PREFACE

TO

‘HEADLONG HALL’ AND THE THREE NOVELS PUBLISHED
ALONG WITH IT IN 1837.

ALL these little publications appeared originally without prefaces. I left them to speak for themselves ; and I thought I might very fitly preserve my own impersonality, having never intruded on the personality of others, nor taken any liberties but with public conduct and public opinions. But an old friend assures me, that to publish a book without a preface is like entering a drawing-room without making a bow. In deference to this opinion, though I am not quite clear of its soundness, I make my prefatory bow at this eleventh hour.

‘Headlong Hall’ was written in 1815 ; ‘Nightmare Abbey’ in 1817 ; ‘Maid Marian,’ with the exception of the last three chapters, in 1818 ; ‘Crotchet Castle’ in 1830. I am desirous to note the intervals, because, at each of those periods, things were true, in great matters and in small, which are true no longer. ‘Headlong Hall’ begins with the Holyhead Mail, and ‘Crotchet Castle’ ends with a rotten borough. The Holyhead Mail no longer keeps the same hours, nor stops at the Capel Cerig Inn, which the progress of improvement has thrown out of the road ; and the rotten boroughs of 1830 have ceased to exist, though there are some very pretty pocket properties, which are their worthy successors. But the classes of tastes, feelings, and opinions, which were successively brought into play in these little tales, remain substantially the same. Perfectibilians, deteriorationists, statu-quo-ites, phrenologists, transcendentalists, political economists, theorists in

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all sciences, projectors in all arts, morbid visionaries, romantic enthusiasts, lovers of music, lovers of the picturesque, and lovers of good dinners, march, and will march for ever, *pari passu* with the march of mechanics, which some facetiously call the march of intellect. The fastidious in old wine are a race that does not decay. Literary violaters of the confidences of private life still gain a disreputable livelihood and an unenviable notoriety. Match-makers from interest, and the disappointed in love and in friendship, are varieties of which specimens are extant. The great principle of the Right of Might is as flourishing now as in the days of Maid Marian: the array of false pretensions, moral, political, and literary, is as imposing as ever: the rulers of the world still feel things in their effects, and never foresee them in their causes: and political mountebanks continue, and will continue, to puff nostrums and practise legerdemain under the eyes of the multitude: following, like the 'learned friend' of Crotchet Castle, a course as tortuous as that of a river, but in a reverse process; beginning by being dark and deep, and ending by being transparent.

THE AUTHOR OF 'HEADLONG HALL.'

March 4, 1837.

CHAPTER I

THE MAIL

THE ambiguous light of a December morning, peeping through the windows of the Holyhead Mail, dispelled the soft visions of the four insides, who had slept, or seemed to sleep, through the first seventy miles of the road, with as much comfort as may be supposed consistent with the jolting of the vehicle, and an occasional admonition to *remember the coachman*, thundered through the open door, accompanied by the gentle breath of Boreas, into the ears of the drowsy traveller.

A lively remark, that *the day was none of the finest*, having elicited a repartee of *quite the contrary*, the various knotty points of meteorology, which usually form the exordium of an English conversation, were successively discussed and exhausted; and, the ice being thus broken, the colloquy rambled to other topics, in the course of which it appeared, to the surprise of every one, that all four, though perfect strangers to each other, were actually bound to the same point, namely, Headlong Hall, the seat of the ancient and honourable family of the Headlongs, of the vale of Llanberris, in Caernarvonshire. This name may appear at first sight not to be truly Cambrian, like those of the Rices, and Prices, and Morgans, and Owens, and Williamses, and Evanses, and Parrys, and Joneses; but, nevertheless, the Headlongs claim to be not less genuine derivatives from the antique branch of Cadwallader than any of the last-named multiramified families. They claim, indeed, by one account, superior antiquity to all of them, and even to Cadwallader himself, a tradition having been handed down in Headlong Hall for some few thousand years, that the founder of the family was preserved in the deluge on the summit of

HEADLONG HALL

Snowdon, and took the name of Rhaiader, which signifies a *waterfall*, in consequence of his having accompanied the water in its descent or diminution, till he found himself comfortably seated on the rocks of Llanberris. But, in later days, when commercial bagmen began to scour the country, the ambiguity of the sound induced his descendants to drop the suspicious denomination of *Riders*, and translate the word into English; when, not being well pleased with the sound of the *thing*, they substituted that of the *quality*, and accordingly adopted the name *Headlong*, the appropriate epithet of waterfall.

I cannot tell how the truth may be :
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

The present representative of this ancient and dignified house, Harry Headlong, Esquire, was, like all other Welsh squires, fond of shooting, hunting, racing, drinking, and other such innocent amusements, *μειζονος δ' αλλου τινος*,¹ as Menander expresses it. But, unlike other Welsh squires, he had actually suffered certain phenomena, called books, to find their way into his house; and, by dint of lounging over them after dinner, on those occasions when he was compelled to take his bottle alone, he became seized with a violent passion to be thought a philosopher and a man of taste; and accordingly set off on an expedition to Oxford, to inquire for other varieties of the same genera, namely, men of taste and philosophers; but, being assured by a learned professor that there were no such things in the University, he proceeded to London, where, after beating up in several booksellers' shops, theatres, exhibition rooms, and other resorts of literature and taste, he formed as extensive an acquaintance with philosophers and dilettanti as his utmost ambition could desire: and it now became his chief wish to have them all together in Headlong Hall, arguing, over his old Port and Burgundy, the various knotty points which had puzzled his pericranium. He had, therefore, sent them invitations in due form to pass their Christmas at Headlong Hall; which invitations the extensive fame of his kitchen fire had induced the greater part of them to accept; and four of the chosen guests had, from different parts of the

¹ Accents are omitted from the Greek quotations in this edition out of deference to the opinion and example of the author, who wrote concerning them in one of his note-books.



'A learned professor.'

metropolis, ensconced themselves in the four corners of the Holyhead Mail.

These four persons were, Mr. Foster,¹ the perfectibilian; Mr. Escot,² the deteriorationist; Mr. Jenkison,³ the statu-quo-ite; and the Reverend Doctor Gaster,⁴ who, though of course neither a philosopher nor a man of taste, had so won on the Squire's fancy, by a learned dissertation on the art of stuffing a turkey, that he concluded no Christmas party would be complete without him.

The conversation among these illuminati soon became animated; and Mr. Foster, who, we must observe, was a thin gentleman, about thirty years of age, with an aquiline nose, black eyes, white teeth, and black hair—took occasion to panegyrisé the vehicle in which they were then travelling, and observed what remarkable improvements had been made in the means of facilitating intercourse between distant parts of the kingdom: he held forth with great energy on the subject of roads and railways, canals and tunnels, manufactures and machinery: 'In short,' said he, 'everything we look on attests the progress of mankind in all the arts of life, and demonstrates their gradual advancement towards a state of unlimited perfection.'

Mr. Escot, who was somewhat younger than Mr. Foster, but rather more pale and saturnine in his aspect, here took up the thread of the discourse, observing that the proposition just advanced seemed to him perfectly contrary to the true state of the case: 'for,' said he, 'these improvements, as you call

¹ Foster, quasi Φωστήρ,—from *φαος* and *τηρεω*, *lucem servo, conservo, observo, custodio*,—one who watches over and guards the light; a sense in which the word is often used amongst us, when we speak of *fostering* a flame.

² Escot, quasi ἐς σκοτον, *in tenebras*, scilicet, *intuens*; one who is always looking into the dark side of the question.

³ Jenkison: This name may be derived from *αιεν ἐξ ἰσων*, *semper ex æqualibus*—scilicet, *mensuris omnia metiens*: one who from equal measures divides and distributes all things: one who from equal measures can always produce arguments on both sides of a question, with so much nicety and exactness as to keep the said question eternally pending, and the balance of the controversy perpetually in statu quo. By an aphæresis of the *α*, an elision of the second *ε*, and an easy and natural mutation of *ξ* into *κ*, the derivation of this name proceeds according to the strictest principles of etymology: *αιεν ἐξ ἰσων*—*Ιεν ἐξ ἰσων*—*Ιεν εκ ἰσων*—*Ιεν 'κ ἰσων*—*Ιενκισων*—*Ienkison*—*Jenkison*.

⁴ Gaster: scilicet Γάσστηρ—*Venter*, et præterea nihil.

them, appear to me only so many links in the great chain of corruption, which will soon fetter the whole human race in irreparable slavery and incurable wretchedness: your improvements proceed in a simple ratio, while the factitious wants and unnatural appetites they engender proceed in a compound one; and thus one generation acquires fifty wants, and fifty means of supplying them are invented, which each in its turn engenders two new ones; so that the next generation has a hundred, the next two hundred, the next four hundred, till every human being becomes such a helpless compound of perverted inclinations, that he is altogether at the mercy of external circumstances, loses all independence and singleness of character, and degenerates so rapidly from the primitive dignity of his sylvan origin, that it is scarcely possible to indulge in any other expectation, than that the whole species must at length be exterminated by its own infinite imbecility and vileness.'

'Your opinions,' said Mr. Jenkison, a round-faced little gentleman of about forty-five, 'seem to differ *toto cælo*. I have often debated the matter in my own mind, *pro* and *con*, and have at length arrived at this conclusion,—that there is not in the human race a tendency either to moral perfectibility or deterioration; but that the quantities of each are so exactly balanced by their reciprocal results, that the species, with respect to the sum of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and misery, remains exactly and perpetually *in statu quo*.'

'Surely,' Mr. Foster said, 'you cannot maintain such a proposition in the face of evidence so luminous. Look at the progress of all the arts and sciences,—see chemistry, botany, astronomy——'

'Surely,' said Mr. Escot, 'experience deposes against you. Look at the rapid growth of corruption, luxury, selfishness——'

'Really, gentlemen,' said the Reverend Doctor Gaster, after clearing the husk in his throat with two or three hems, 'this is a very sceptical, and, I must say, atheistical conversation, and I should have thought, out of respect to my cloth——'

Here the coach stopped, and the coachman, opening the door, vociferated—'Breakfast, gentlemen'; a sound which so gladdened the ears of the divine, that the alacrity with which he sprang from the vehicle superinduced a distortion of his

L. R. Miller



'The Reverend Doctor Gaster was obliged to limp into the inn between Mr. Escot and Mr. Jenkison.'

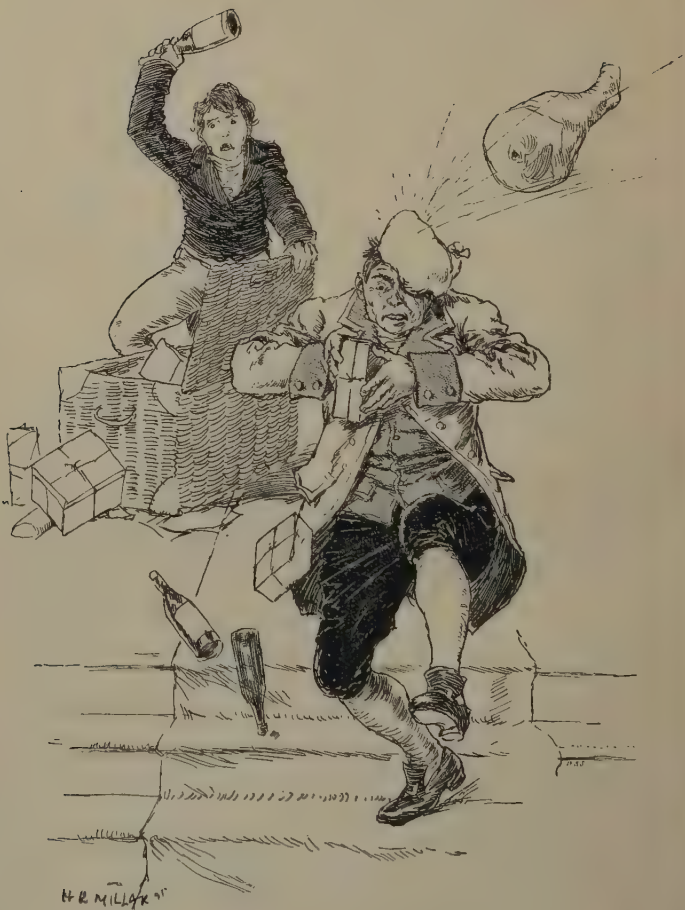
THE MAIL

ankle, and he was obliged to limp into the inn between Mr. Escot and Mr. Jenkison ; the former observing that he ought to look for nothing but evil, and, therefore, should not be surprised at this little accident ; the latter remarking that the comfort of a good breakfast, and the pain of a sprained ankle, pretty exactly balanced each other.

CHAPTER II

THE SQUIRE—THE BREAKFAST

SQUIRE HEADLONG, in the meanwhile, was quadripartite in his locality; that is to say, he was superintending the operations in four scenes of action—namely, the cellar, the library, the picture-gallery, and the dining-room,—preparing for the reception of his philosophical and dilettanti visitors. His myrmidon on this occasion was a little red-nosed butler, whom nature seemed to have cast in the genuine mould of an antique Silenus, and who waddled about the house after his master, wiping his forehead and panting for breath, while the latter bounced from room to room like a cracker, and was indefatigable in his requisitions for the proximity of his vinous Achates, whose advice and co-operation he deemed no less necessary in the library than in the cellar. Multitudes of packages had arrived, by land and water, from London, and Liverpool, and Chester, and Manchester, and Birmingham, and various parts of the mountains: books, wine, cheese, globes, mathematical instruments, turkeys, telescopes, hams, tongues, microscopes, quadrants, sextants, fiddles, flutes, tea, sugar, electrical machines, figs, spices, air-pumps, soda-water, chemical apparatus, eggs, French-horns, drawing books, palettes, oils and colours, bottled ale and porter, scenery for a private theatre, pickles and fish-sauce, patent lamps and chandeliers, barrels of oysters, sofas, chairs, tables, carpets, beds, looking-glasses, pictures, fruits and confections, nuts, oranges, lemons, packages of salt salmon, and jars of Portugal grapes. These, arriving with infinite rapidity, and in inexhaustible succession, had been deposited at random, as the convenience of the moment dictated,—sofas in the cellar, chandeliers in the kitchen,



'The rage and impetuosity of the Squire continued fermenting to the highest degree of exasperation.'

THE BREAKFAST

hampers of ale in the drawing-room, and fiddles and fish-sauce in the library. The servants, unpacking all these in furious haste, and flying with them from place to place, according to the tumultuous directions of Squire Headlong and the little fat butler who fumed at his heels, chafed, and crossed, and clashed, and tumbled over one another up stairs and down. All was bustle, uproar, and confusion ; yet nothing seemed to advance : while the rage and impetuosity of the Squire continued fermenting to the highest degree of exasperation, which he signified, from time to time, by converting some newly unpacked article, such as a book, a bottle, a ham, or a fiddle, into a missile against the head of some unfortunate servant who did not seem to move in a ratio of velocity corresponding to the intensity of his master's desires.

In this state of eager preparation we shall leave the happy inhabitants of Headlong Hall, and return to the three philosophers and the unfortunate divine, whom we left limping with a sprained ankle into the breakfast-room of the inn ; where his two supporters deposited him safely in a large arm-chair, with his wounded leg comfortably stretched out on another. The morning being extremely cold, he contrived to be seated as near the fire as was consistent with his other object of having a perfect command of the table and its apparatus ; which consisted not only of the ordinary comforts of tea and toast, but of a delicious supply of new-laid eggs, and a magnificent round of beef ; against which Mr. Escot immediately pointed all the artillery of his eloquence, declaring the use of animal food, conjointly with that of fire, to be one of the principal causes of the present degeneracy of mankind. 'The natural and original man,' said he, 'lived in the woods : the roots and fruits of the earth supplied his simple nutriment : he had few desires, and no diseases. But, when he began to sacrifice victims on the altar of superstition, to pursue the goat and the deer, and, by the pernicious invention of fire, to pervert their flesh into food, luxury, disease, and premature death, were let loose upon the world. Such is clearly the correct interpretation of the fable of Prometheus, which is the symbolical portraiture of that disastrous epoch, when man first applied fire to culinary purposes, and thereby surrendered his liver to the vulture of disease. From that period the stature of mankind has been in a state of gradual diminution, and I

have not the least doubt that it will continue to grow *small by degrees, and lamentably less*, till the whole race will vanish imperceptibly from the face of the earth.'

'I cannot agree,' said Mr. Foster, 'in the consequences being so very disastrous. I admit that in some respects the use of animal food retards, though it cannot materially inhibit, the perfectibility of the species. But the use of fire was indispensably necessary, as Æschylus and Virgil expressly assert, to give being to the various arts of life, which, in their rapid and interminable progress, will finally conduct every individual of the race to the philosophic pinnacle of pure and perfect felicity.'

'In the controversy concerning animal and vegetable food,' said Mr. Jenkison, 'there is much to be said on both sides; and, the question being in equipoise, I content myself with a mixed diet, and make a point of eating whatever is placed before me, provided it be good in its kind.'

In this opinion his two brother philosophers practically coincided, though they both ran down the theory as highly detrimental to the best interests of man.

'I am really astonished,' said the Reverend Doctor Gaster, gracefully picking off the supernal fragments of an egg he had just cracked, and clearing away a space at the top for the reception of a small piece of butter—'I am really astonished, gentlemen, at the very heterodox opinions I have heard you deliver: since nothing can be more obvious than that all animals were created solely and exclusively for the use of man.

'Even the tiger that devours him?' said Mr. Escot.

'Certainly,' said Doctor Gaster.

'How do you prove it?' said Mr. Escot.

'It requires no proof,' said Doctor Gaster: 'it is a point of doctrine. It is written, therefore it is so.'

'Nothing can be more logical,' said Mr. Jenkison. 'It has been said,' continued he, 'that the ox was expressly made to be eaten by man: it may be said, by a parity of reasoning, that man was expressly made to be eaten by the tiger: but as wild oxen exist where there are no men, and men where there are no tigers, it would seem that in these instances they do not properly answer the ends of their creation.'

'It is a mystery,' said Doctor Gaster.

'Not to launch into the question of final causes,' said Mr.

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Escot, helping himself at the same time to a slice of beef, 'concerning which I will candidly acknowledge I am as profoundly ignorant as the most dogmatical theologian possibly can be, I just wish to observe, that the pure and peaceful manners which Homer ascribes to the Lotophagi, and which at this day characterise many nations (the Hindoos, for example, who subsist exclusively on the fruits of the earth), depose very strongly in favour of a vegetable regimen.'

'It may be said, on the contrary,' said Mr. Foster, 'that animal food acts on the mind as manure does on flowers, forcing them into a degree of expansion they would not otherwise have attained. If we can imagine a philosophical auricula falling into a train of theoretical meditation on its original and natural nutriment, till it should work itself up into a profound abomination of bullock's blood, sugar-baker's scum, and other *unnatural* ingredients of that rich composition of soil which had brought it to perfection,¹ and insist on being planted in common earth, it would have all the advantage of natural theory on its side that the most strenuous advocate of the vegetable system could desire; but it would soon discover the practical error of its retrograde experiment by its lamentable inferiority in strength and beauty to all the auriculas around it. I am afraid, in some instances at least, this analogy holds true with respect to mind. No one will make a comparison, in point of mental power, between the Hindoos and the ancient Greeks.'

'The anatomy of the human stomach,' said Mr. Escot, 'and the formation of the teeth, clearly place man in the class of frugivorous animals.'

'Many anatomists,' said Mr. Foster, 'are of a different opinion, and agree in discerning the characteristics of the carnivorous classes.'

'I am no anatomist,' said Mr. Jenkison, 'and cannot decide where doctors disagree; in the meantime, I conclude that man is omnivorous, and on that conclusion I act.'

'Your conclusion is truly orthodox,' said the Reverend Doctor Gaster: 'indeed, the loaves and fishes are typical of a mixed diet; and the practice of the Church in all ages shows——'

'That it never loses sight of the loaves and fishes,' said Mr. Escot.

¹ See Emmerton on the Auricula.

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‘It never loses sight of any point of sound doctrine,’ said the reverend doctor.

The coachman now informed them their time was elapsed ; nor could all the pathetic remonstrances of the reverend divine, who declared he had not half breakfasted, succeed in gaining one minute from the inexorable Jehu.

‘You will allow,’ said Mr. Foster, as soon as they were again in motion, ‘that the wild man of the woods could not transport himself over two hundred miles of forest, with as much facility as one of these vehicles transports you and me through the heart of this cultivated country.’

‘I am certain,’ said Mr. Escot, ‘that a wild man can travel an immense distance without fatigue ; but what is the advantage of locomotion ? The wild man is happy in one spot, and there he remains : the civilised man is wretched in every place he happens to be in, and then congratulates himself on being accommodated with a machine that will whirl him to another, where he will be just as miserable as ever.’

We shall now leave the mail-coach to find its way to Capel Cerig, the nearest point of the Holyhead road to the dwelling of Squire Headlong.

CHAPTER III

THE ARRIVALS

IN the midst of that scene of confusion thrice confounded, in which we left the inhabitants of Headlong Hall, arrived the lovely Caprioletta Headlong, the Squire's sister (whom he had sent for, from the residence of her maiden aunt at Caernarvon, to do the honours of his house), beaming like light on chaos, to arrange disorder and harmonise discord. The tempestuous spirit of her brother became instantaneously as smooth as the surface of the lake of Llanberris; and the little fat butler 'plessed Cot, and St. Tافit, and the peautiful tamsel,' for being permitted to move about the house in his natural pace. In less than twenty-four hours after her arrival everything was disposed in its proper station, and the Squire began to be all impatience for the appearance of his promised guests.

The first visitor with whom he had the felicity of shaking hands was Marmaduke Milestone, Esquire, who arrived with a portfolio under his arm. Mr. Milestone¹ was a picturesque

¹ Mr. Knight, in a note to the *Landscape*, having taken the liberty of laughing at a notable device of a celebrated *improver*, for giving greatness of character to a place, and showing an undivided extent of property, by placing the family arms on the neighbouring *milestones*, the improver retorted on him with a charge of misquotation, misrepresentation, and malice prepense. Mr. Knight, in the preface to the second edition of his poem, quotes the improver's words :—' The market-house, or other public edifice, or even a *mere stone with distances*, may bear the arms of the family' : and adds :—' By a *mere stone with distances*, the author of the *Landscape* certainly thought he meant a *milestone* ; but, if he did not, any other interpretation which he may think more advantageous to himself shall readily be adopted, as it will equally answer the purpose of the quotation.' The improver, however, did not condescend to explain what he really meant by a *mere stone with distances*, though he strenuously

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landscape gardener of the first celebrity, who was not without hopes of persuading Squire Headlong to put his romantic pleasure-grounds under a process of improvement, promising himself a signal triumph for his incomparable art in the difficult and, therefore, glorious achievement of polishing and trimming the rocks of Llanberris.

Next arrived a post-chaise from the inn at Capel Cerig, containing the Reverend Doctor Gaster. It appeared that, when the mail-coach deposited its valuable cargo, early on the second morning, at the inn at Capel Cerig, there was only one post-chaise to be had; it was therefore determined that the reverend doctor and the luggage should proceed in the chaise, and that the three philosophers should walk. When the reverend gentleman first seated himself in the chaise, the windows were down all round; but he allowed it to drive off under the idea that he could easily pull them up. This task, however, he had considerable difficulty in accomplishing, and when he had succeeded, it availed him little; for the frames and glasses had long since discontinued their ancient familiarity. He had, however, no alternative but to proceed, and to comfort himself, as he went, with some choice quotations from the book of Job. The road led along the edges of tremendous chasms, with torrents dashing in the bottom; so that, if his teeth had not chattered with cold, they would have done so with fear. The Squire shook him heartily by the hand, and congratulated him on his safe arrival at Headlong Hall. The Doctor returned the squeeze, and assured him that the congratulation was by no means misapplied.

Next came the three philosophers, highly delighted with their walk, and full of rapturous exclamations on the sublime beauties of the scenery.

The Doctor shrugged up his shoulders, and confessed he preferred the scenery of Putney and Kew, where a man could go comfortably to sleep in his chaise, without being in momentary terror of being hurled headlong down a precipice.

Mr. Milestone observed, that there were great capabilities in the scenery, but it wanted shaving and polishing. If he could but have it under his care for a single twelvemonth, he assured them no one would be able to know it again.

maintained that he did *not* mean a *milestone*. His idea, therefore, stands on record, invested with all the sublimity that obscurity can confer.



'When the reverend gentleman first seated himself in the chaise, the windows were down all round; but he allowed it to drive off under the idea that he could easily pull them up.'

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Mr. Jenkison thought the scenery was just what it ought to be, and required no alteration.

Mr. Foster thought it could be improved, but doubted if that effect would be produced by the system of Mr. Milestone.

Mr. Escot did not think that any human being could improve it, but had no doubt of its having changed very considerably for the worse, since the days when the now barren rocks were covered with the immense forest of Snowdon, which must have contained a very fine race of wild men, not less than ten feet high.

The next arrival was that of Mr. Cranium, and his lovely daughter, Miss Cephalis Cranium, who flew to the arms of her dear friend Caprioletta, with all that warmth of friendship which young ladies usually assume towards each other in the presence of young gentlemen.¹

Miss Cephalis blushed like a carnation at the sight of Mr. Escot, and Mr. Escot glowed like a corn-poppy at the sight of Miss Cephalis. It was at least obvious to all observers that he could imagine the possibility of one change for the better, even in this terrestrial theatre of universal deterioration.

Mr. Cranium's eyes wandered from Mr. Escot to his daughter, and from his daughter to Mr. Escot; and his complexion, in the course of the scrutiny, underwent several variations, from the dark red of the peony to the deep blue of the convolvulus.

Mr. Escot had formerly been the received lover of Miss Cephalis, till he incurred the indignation of her father by laughing at a very profound craniological dissertation which the old gentleman delivered; nor had Mr. Escot yet discovered the means of mollifying his wrath.

Mr. Cranium carried in his own hands a bag, the contents of which were too precious to be intrusted to any one but himself; and earnestly entreated to be shown to the chamber appropriated for his reception, that he might deposit his treasure in safety. The little butler was accordingly summoned to conduct him to his *cubiculum*.

Next arrived a post-chaise, carrying four insides, whose

¹ 'Il est constant qu'elles se baisent de meilleur cœur, et se caressent avec plus de grace devant les hommes, fières d'aiguiser impunément leur convoitise par l'image des faveurs qu'elles savent leur faire envier.'—ROUSSEAU, *Emile*, liv. 5.

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extreme thinness enabled them to travel thus economically without experiencing the slightest inconvenience. These four personages were, two very profound critics, Mr. Gall and Mr. Treacle, who followed the trade of reviewers, but occasionally indulged themselves in the composition of bad poetry; and two very multitudinous versifiers, Mr. Nightshade and Mr. Mac Laurel, who followed the trade of poetry, but occasionally indulged themselves in the composition of bad criticism. Mr. Nightshade and Mr. Mac Laurel were the two senior lieutenants of a very formidable corps of critics, of whom Timothy Treacle, Esquire, was captain, and Geoffrey Gall, Esquire, generalissimo.

The last arrivals were Mr. Cornelius Chromatic, the most profound and scientific of all amateurs of the fiddle, with his two blooming daughters, Miss Tenorina and Miss Graziosa; Sir Patrick O'Prism, a dilettante painter of high renown, and his maiden aunt, Miss Philomela Poppyseed, an indefatigable compounder of novels, written for the express purpose of supporting every species of superstition and prejudice; and Mr. Panscope, the chemical, botanical, geological, astronomical, mathematical, metaphysical, meteorological, anatomical, physiological, galvanistical, musical, pictorial, bibliographical, critical philosopher, who had run through the whole circle of the sciences, and understood them all equally well.

Mr. Milestone was impatient to take a walk round the grounds, that he might examine how far the system of clumping and levelling could be carried advantageously into effect. The ladies retired to enjoy each other's society in the first happy moments of meeting: the Reverend Doctor Gaster sat by the library fire, in profound meditation over a volume of the *Almanach des Gourmands*: Mr. Panscope sat in the opposite corner with a volume of Rees' Cyclopædia: Mr. Cranium was busy upstairs: Mr. Chromatic retreated to the music-room, where he fiddled through a book of solos before the ringing of the first dinner bell. The remainder of the party supported Mr. Milestone's proposition; and, accordingly, Squire Headlong and Mr. Milestone leading the van, they commenced their perambulation.



'The next arrival was that of Mr. Cranium and his lovely daughter.'

CHAPTER IV

THE GROUNDS

‘I PERCEIVE,’ said Mr. Milestone, after they had walked a few paces, ‘these grounds have never been touched by the finger of taste.’

‘The place is quite a wilderness,’ said Squire Headlong : ‘for, during the latter part of my father’s life, while I was *finishing* my *education*, he troubled himself about nothing but the cellar, and suffered everything else to go to rack and ruin. A mere wilderness, as you see, even now in December ; but in summer a complete nursery of briers, a forest of thistles, a plantation of nettles, without any live stock but goats, that have eaten up all the bark of the trees. Here you see is the pedestal of a statue, with only half a leg and four toes remaining : there were many here once. When I was a boy, I used to sit every day on the shoulders of Hercules : what became of *him* I have never been able to ascertain. Neptune has been lying these seven years in the dust-hole ; Atlas had his head knocked off to fit him for propping a shed ; and only the day before yesterday we fished Bacchus out of the horse-pond.’

‘My dear sir,’ said Mr. Milestone, ‘accord me your permission to wave the wand of enchantment over your grounds. The rocks shall be blown up, the trees shall be cut down, the wilderness and all its goats shall vanish like mist. Pagodas and Chinese bridges, gravel walks and shrubberies, bowling-greens, canals, and clumps of larch, shall rise upon its ruins. One age, sir, has brought to light the treasures of ancient learning ; a second has penetrated into the depths of metaphysics ; a third has brought to perfection the science of

astronomy; but it was reserved for the exclusive genius of the present times to invent the noble art of picturesque gardening, which has given, as it were, a new tint to the complexion of nature, and a new outline to the physiognomy of the universe !'

'Give me leave,' said Sir Patrick O'Prism, 'to take an exception to that same. Your system of levelling, and trimming, and clipping, and docking, and clumping, and polishing, and cropping, and shaving, destroys all the beautiful intricacies of natural luxuriance, and all the graduated harmonies of light and shade, melting into one another, as you see them on that rock over yonder. I never saw one of your improved places, as you call them, and which are nothing but big bowling-greens, like sheets of green paper, with a parcel of round clumps scattered over them, like so many spots of ink, flicked at random out of a pen,¹ and a solitary animal here and there looking as if it were lost, that I did not think it was for all the world like Hounslow Heath, thinly sprinkled over with bushes and highwaymen.'

'Sir,' said Mr. Milestone, 'you will have the goodness to make a distinction between the picturesque and the beautiful.'

'Will I?' said Sir Patrick, 'och! but I won't. For what is beautiful? That what pleases the eye. And what pleases the eye? Tints variously broken and blended. Now, tints variously broken and blended constitute the picturesque.'

'Allow me,' said Mr. Gall. 'I distinguish the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call *unexpectedness*.'

'Pray, sir,' said Mr. Milestone, 'by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for the second time?'²

Mr. Gall bit his lips, and inwardly vowed to revenge himself on Milestone, by cutting up his next publication.

A long controversy now ensued concerning the picturesque and the beautiful, highly edifying to Squire Headlong.

The three philosophers stopped, as they wound round a projecting point of rock, to contemplate a little boat which was gliding over the tranquil surface of the lake below.

¹ See Price on the Picturesque.

² See Knight on Taste, and the *Edinburgh Review*, No. XIV.



'Only the day before yesterday we fished Bacchus out of the horse-pond.'

‘The blessings of civilisation,’ said Mr. Foster, ‘extend themselves to the meanest individuals of the community. That boatman, singing as he sails along, is, I have no doubt, a very happy, and, comparatively to the men of his class some centuries back, a very enlightened and intelligent man.’

‘As a partisan of the system of the moral perfectibility of the human race,’ said Mr. Escot,—who was always for considering things on a large scale, and whose thoughts immediately wandered from the lake to the ocean, from the little boat to a ship of the line,—‘you will probably be able to point out to me the degree of improvement that you suppose to have taken place in the character of a sailor, from the days when Jason sailed through the Cyanean Symplegades, or Noah moored his ark on the summit of Ararat.’

‘If you talk to me,’ said Mr. Foster, ‘of mythological personages, of course I cannot meet you on fair grounds.’

‘We will begin, if you please, then,’ said Mr. Escot, ‘no further back than the battle of Salamis; and I will ask you if you think the mariners of England are, in any one respect, morally or intellectually, superior to those who then preserved the liberties of Greece, under the direction of Themistocles.’

‘I will venture to assert,’ said Mr. Foster, ‘that, considered merely as sailors, which is the only fair mode of judging them, they are as far superior to the Athenians, as the structure of our ships is superior to that of theirs. Would not one English seventy-four, think you, have been sufficient to have sunk, burned, and put to flight, all the Persian and Grecian vessels in that memorable bay? Contemplate the progress of naval architecture, and the slow, but immense succession of concatenated intelligence, by which it has gradually attained its present stage of perfectibility. In this, as in all other branches of art and science, every generation possesses all the knowledge of the preceding, and adds to it its own discoveries in a progression to which there seems no limit. The skill requisite to direct these immense machines is proportionate to their magnitude and complicated mechanism; and, therefore, the English sailor, considered merely as a sailor, is vastly superior to the ancient Greek.’

‘You make a distinction, of course,’ said Mr. Escot, ‘between scientific and moral perfectibility?’

‘I conceive,’ said Mr. Foster, ‘that men are virtuous in

proportion as they are enlightened ; and that, as every generation increases in knowledge, it also increases in virtue.'

'I wish it were so,' said Mr. Escot ; 'but to me the very reverse appears to be the fact. The progress of knowledge is not general : it is confined to a chosen few of every age. How far these are better than their neighbours, we may examine by and by. The mass of mankind is composed of beasts of burden, mere clods, and tools of their superiors. By enlarging and complicating your machines, you degrade, not exalt, the human animals you employ to direct them. When the boatswain of a seventy-four pipes all hands to the main tack, and flourishes his rope's end over the shoulders of the poor fellows who are tugging at the ropes, do you perceive so dignified, so gratifying a picture, as Ulysses exhorting his dear friends, his ΕΠΗΡΕΣ 'ΕΤΑΙΡΟΙ, to ply their oars with energy? You will say, Ulysses was a fabulous character. But the economy of his vessel is drawn from nature. Every man on board has a character and a will of his own. He talks to them, argues with them, convinces them ; and they obey him, because they love him, and know the reason of his orders. Now, as I have said before, all singleness of character is lost. We divide men into herds like cattle : an individual man, if you strip him of all that is extraneous to himself, is the most wretched and contemptible creature on the face of the earth. The sciences advance. True. A few years of study puts a modern mathematician in possession of more than Newton knew, and leaves him at leisure to add new discoveries of his own. Agreed. But does this make him a Newton? Does it put him in possession of that range of intellect, that grasp of mind, from which the discoveries of Newton sprang? It is mental power that I look for : if you can demonstrate the increase of that, I will give up the field. Energy—independence—individuality—disinterested virtue—active benevolence—self-oblivion—universal philanthropy—these are the qualities I desire to find, and of which I contend that every succeeding age produces fewer examples. I repeat it ; there is scarcely such a thing to be found as a single individual man ; a few classes compose the whole frame of society, and when you know one of a class you know the whole of it. Give me the wild man of the woods ; the original, unthinking, unscientific, unlogical savage : in him there is at least some good ; but, in a civilised, sophisticated,

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cold-blooded, mechanical, calculating slave of Mammon and the world, there is none—absolutely none. Sir, if I fall into a river, an unsophisticated man will jump in and bring me out ; but a philosopher will look on with the utmost calmness, and consider me in the light of a projectile, and, making a calculation of the degree of force with which I have impinged the surface, the resistance of the fluid, the velocity of the current, and the depth of the water in that particular place, he will ascertain with the greatest nicety in what part of the mud at the bottom I may probably be found, at any given distance of time from the moment of my first immersion.’

Mr. Foster was preparing to reply, when the first dinner-bell rang, and he immediately commenced a precipitate return towards the house ; followed by his two companions, who both admitted that he was now leading the way to at least a temporary period of physical amelioration : ‘but, alas !’ added Mr. Escot, after a moment’s reflection, ‘*Epulæ NOCUERE repostæ !*’¹

¹ Protracted banquets have been copious sources of evil.

CHAPTER V

THE DINNER

THE sun was now terminating his diurnal course, and the lights were glittering on the festal board. When the ladies had retired, and the Burgundy had taken two or three tours of the table, the following conversation took place :—

Squire Headlong. Push about the bottle : Mr. Escot, it stands with you. No heeltaps. As to skylight, liberty-hall.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Really, Squire Headlong, this is the vara nactar itsel. Ye hae saretainly discovered the tarrestrial paradise, but it flows wi' a better leecor than milk an' honey.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster. Hem ! Mr. Mac Laurel ! there is a degree of profaneness in that observation, which I should not have looked for in so staunch a supporter of church and state. Milk and honey was the pure food of the antediluvian patriarchs, who knew not the use of the grape, happily for them.—(*Tossing off a bumper of Burgundy.*)

Mr. Escot. Happy, indeed ! The first inhabitants of the world knew not the use either of wine or animal food ; it is, therefore, by no means incredible that they lived to the age of several centuries, free from war, and commerce, and arbitrary government, and every other species of desolating wickedness. But man was then a very different animal to what he now is : he had not the faculty of speech ; he was not encumbered with clothes ; he lived in the open air ; his first step out of which, as Hamlet truly observes, is *into his grave*.¹ His first dwellings, of course, were the hollows of trees and rocks. In process of time he began to build : thence grew villages ; thence grew cities. Luxury, oppression, poverty, misery, and disease

¹ See Lord Monboddos *Ancient Metaphysics*.

kept pace with the progress of his pretended improvements, till, from a free, strong, healthy, peaceful animal, he has become a weak, distempered, cruel, carnivorous slave.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster. Your doctrine is orthodox, in so far as you assert that the original man was not encumbered with clothes, and that he lived in the open air; but, as to the faculty of speech, that, it is certain, he had, for the authority of Moses——

Mr. Escot. Of course, sir, I do not presume to dissent from the very exalted authority of that most enlightened astronomer and profound cosmogonist, who had, moreover, the advantage of being inspired; but when I indulge myself with a ramble in the fields of speculation, and attempt to deduce what is probable and rational from the sources of analysis, experience, and comparison, I confess I am too often apt to lose sight of the doctrines of that great fountain of theological and geological philosophy.

Squire Headlong. Push about the bottle.

Mr. Foster. Do you suppose the mere animal life of a wild man, living on acorns, and sleeping on the ground, comparable in felicity to that of a Newton, ranging through unlimited space, and penetrating into the arcana of universal motion—to that of a Locke, unravelling the labyrinth of mind—to that of a Lavoisier, detecting the minutest combinations of matter, and reducing all nature to its elements—to that of a Shakspeare, piercing and developing the springs of passion—or of a Milton, identifying himself, as it were, with the beings of an invisible world?

Mr. Escot. You suppose extreme cases: but, on the score of happiness, what comparison can you make between the tranquil being of the wild man of the woods and the wretched and turbulent existence of Milton, the victim of persecution, poverty, blindness, and neglect? The records of literature demonstrate that Happiness and Intelligence are seldom sisters. Even if it were otherwise, it would prove nothing. The many are always sacrificed to the few. Where one man advances, hundreds retrograde; and the balance is always in favour of universal deterioration.

Mr. Foster. Virtue is independent of external circumstances. The exalted understanding looks into the truth of things, and, in its own peaceful contemplations, rises superior

to the world. No philosopher would resign his mental acquisitions for the purchase of any terrestrial good.

Mr. Escot. In other words, no man whatever would resign his identity, which is nothing more than the consciousness of his perceptions, as the price of any acquisition. But every man, without exception, would willingly effect a very material change in his relative situation to other individuals. Unluckily for the rest of your argument, the understanding of literary people is for the most part *exalted*, as you express it, not so much by the love of truth and virtue, as by arrogance and self-sufficiency; and there is, perhaps, less disinterestedness, less liberality, less general benevolence, and more envy, hatred, and uncharitableness among them, than among any other description of men.

(The eye of Mr. Escot, as he pronounced these words, rested very innocently and unintentionally on Mr. Gall.)

Mr. Gall. You allude, sir, I presume, to my review.

Mr. Escot. Pardon me, sir. You will be convinced it is impossible I can allude to your review, when I assure you that I have never read a single page of it.

Mr. Gall, Mr. Treacle, Mr. Nightshade, and Mr. Mac Laurel. Never read our review!!!!

Mr. Escot. Never. I look on periodical criticism in general to be a species of shop, where panegyric and defamation are sold, wholesale, retail, and for exportation. I am not inclined to be a purchaser of these commodities, or to encourage a trade which I consider pregnant with mischief.

Mr. Mac Laurel. I can readily conceive, sir, ye wou'd na wullingly encoourage ony dealer in panegeeric: but, frae the manner in which ye speak o' the first creetics an' scholars o' the age, I shou'd think ye wou'd hae a leetle mair predilaction for deefamation.

Mr. Escot. I have no predilection, sir, for defamation. I make a point of speaking the truth on all occasions; and it seldom happens that the truth can be spoken without some stricken deer pronouncing it a libel.

Mr. Nightshade. You are perhaps, sir, an enemy to literature in general?

Mr. Escot. If I were, sir, I should be a better friend to periodical critics.

Squire Headlong. Buz!

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Mr. Treacle. May I simply take the liberty to inquire into the basis of your objection?

Mr. Escot. I conceive that periodical criticism disseminates superficial knowledge, and its perpetual adjunct, vanity; that it checks in the youthful mind the habit of thinking for itself; that it delivers partial opinions, and thereby misleads the judgment; that it is never conducted with a view to the general interests of literature, but to serve the interested ends of individuals, and the miserable purposes of party.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Ye ken, sir, a mon mun leeve.

Mr. Escot. While he can live honourably, naturally, justly, certainly: no longer.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Every mon, sir, leeves according to his ain notions of honour an' justice: there is a wee defference amang the learned wi' respect to the defineetion o' the terms.

Mr. Escot. I believe it is generally admitted that one of the ingredients of justice is disinterestedness.

Mr. Mac Laurel. It is na admetted, sir, amang the pheelosophers of Edinbroo', that there is ony sic thing as desenterestedness in the world, or that a mon can care for onything sae much as his ain sel: for ye mun observe, sir, every mon has his ain parteecular feelings of what is gude, an' beautifu', an' consentaneous to his ain indiveedual nature, an' desires to see everything aboot him in that parteecular state which is maist conformable to his ain notions o' the moral an' poleetical fetness o' things. Twa men, sir, shall purchase a piece o' grund atween 'em, and ae mon shall cover his half wi' a park——

Mr. Milestone. Beautifully laid out in lawns and clumps, with a belt of trees at the circumference, and an artificial lake in the centre.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Exactly, sir: an' shall keep it a' for his ain sel: an' the other mon shall divide his half into leetle farms of twa or three acres——

Mr. Escot. Like those of the Roman republic, and build a cottage on each of them, and cover his land with a simple, innocent, and smiling population, who shall owe, not only their happiness, but their existence, to his benevolence.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Exactly, sir: an' ye will ca' the first mon selfish, an' the second desenterested; but the pheelosophical truth is simply this, that the ane is pleased wi' looking

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at trees, an' the other wi' seeing people happy an' comfortable. It is aunly a matter of indiveedual feeling. A paisant saves a mon's life for the same reason that a hero or a footpad cuts his thrapple : an' a pheelosopher delevs a mon frae a preson, for the same reason that a tailor or a prime meenster puts him into it : because it is conformable to his ain parteecular feelings o' the moral an' poleetical fetness o' things.

Squire Headlong. Wake the Reverend Doctor. Doctor, the bottle stands with you.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster. It is an error of which I am seldom guilty.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Noo, ye ken, sir, every mon is the centre of his ain system, an' endaivours as much as possible to adapt everything aroond him to his ain parteecular views.

Mr. Escot. Thus, sir, I presume, it suits the particular views of a poet, at one time to take the part of the people against their oppressors, and at another, to take the part of the oppressors against the people.

Mr. Mac Laurel. Ye mun alloo, sir, that poetry is a sort of ware or commodity, that is brought into the public market wi' a' other descreptions of merchandise, an' that a mon is pairfectly justified in getting the best price he can for his article. Noo, there are three reasons for taking the part o' the people ; the first is, when general leebeerty an' public happiness are conformable to your ain parteecular feelings o' the moral an' poleetical fetness o' things : the second is, when they happen to be, as it were, in a state of exceetabeelity, an' ye think ye can get a gude price for your commodity, by flingin' in a leetle seasoning o' pheelanthropy an' republican speerit ; the third is, when ye think ye can bully the menestry into gieing ye a place or a pansion to haud your din, an' in that case, ye point an attack against them within the pale o' the law ; an' if they tak nae heed o' ye, ye open a stronger fire ; an' the less heed they tak, the mair ye bawl ; an' the mair factious ye grow, always within the pale o' the law, till they send a plenipotentiary to treat wi' ye for yoursel, an' then the mair popular ye happen to be, the better price ye fetch.

Squire Headlong. Off with your heeltaps.

Mr. Cranium. I perfectly agree with Mr. Mac Laurel in his definition of self-love and disinterestedness : every man's actions are determined by his peculiar views, and those views



'Memento mori. Come, a bumper of Burgundy.'

are determined by the organisation of his skull. A man in whom the organ of benevolence is not developed, cannot be benevolent: he in whom it is so, cannot be otherwise. The organ of self-love is prodigiously developed in the greater number of subjects that have fallen under my observation.

Mr. Escot. Much less, I presume, among savage than civilised men, who, *constant only to the love of self, and consistent only in their aim to deceive, are always actuated by the hope of personal advantage, or by the dread of personal punishment.*¹

Mr. Cranium. Very probably.

Mr. Escot. You have, of course, found very copious specimens of the organs of hypocrisy, destruction, and avarice.

Mr. Cranium. Secretiveness, destructiveness, and covetiveness. You may add, if you please, that of constructiveness.

Mr. Escot. Meaning, I presume, the organ of building; which I contend to be not a natural organ of the *featherless biped*.

Mr. Cranium. Pardon me: it is here.—(*As he said these words, he produced a skull from his pocket, and placed it on the table to the great surprise of the company.*)—This was the skull of Sir Christopher Wren. You observe this protuberance—(*The skull was handed round the table*).

Mr. Escot. I contend that the original unsophisticated man was by no means constructive. He lived in the open air, under a tree.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster. The tree of life. Unquestionably. Till he had tasted the forbidden fruit.

Mr. Jenkison. At which period, probably, the organ of constructiveness was added to his anatomy, as a punishment for his transgression.

Mr. Escot. There could not have been a more severe one, since the propensity which has led him to building cities has proved the greatest curse of his existence.

Squire Headlong—(*taking the skull*). *Memento mori.* Come, a bumper of Burgundy.

Mr. Nightshade. A very classical application, Squire Headlong. The Romans were in the practice of adhibiting skulls at their banquets, and sometimes little skeletons of silver, as a silent admonition to the guests to enjoy life while it lasted.

¹ Drummond's *Academical Questions*.

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The Reverend Doctor Gaster. Sound doctrine, Mr. Nightshade.

Mr. Escot. I question its soundness. The use of vinous spirit has a tremendous influence in the deterioration of the human race.

Mr. Foster. I fear, indeed, it operates as a considerable check to the progress of the species towards moral and intellectual perfection. Yet many great men have been of opinion that it exalts the imagination, fires the genius, accelerates the flow of ideas, and imparts to dispositions naturally cold and deliberative that enthusiastic sublimation which is the source of greatness and energy.

Mr. Nightshade. *Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.*¹

Mr. Jenkison. I conceive the use of wine to be always pernicious in excess, but often useful in moderation: it certainly kills some, but it saves the lives of others: I find that an occasional glass, taken with judgment and caution, has a very salutary effect in maintaining that equilibrium of the system, which it is always my aim to preserve; and this calm and temperate use of wine was, no doubt, what Homer meant to inculcate, when he said: Παρ δὲ δεπας οἶνοιο, πικρὸν ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγει.²

Squire Headlong. Good. Pass the bottle. (*Un morne silence.*) Sir Christopher does not seem to have raised our spirits. Chromatic, favour us with a specimen of your vocal powers. Something in point.

Mr. Chromatic, without further preface, immediately struck up the following

SONG

In his last binn SIR PETER lies,
Who knew not what it was to frown :
Death took him mellow, by surprise,
And in his cellar stopped him down.
Through all our land we could not boast
A knight more gay, more prompt than he,
To rise and fill a bumper toast,
And pass it round with THREE TIMES THREE.

¹ Homer is proved to have been a lover of wine by the praises he bestows upon it.

² A cup of wine at hand, to drink as inclination prompts.

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None better knew the feast to sway,
Or keep Mirth's boat in better trim ;
For Nature had but little clay
Like that of which she moulded him.
The meanest guest that graced his board
Was there the freest of the free,
His bumper toast when PETER poured,
And passed it round with THREE TIMES THREE.

He kept at true good humour's mark
The social flow of pleasure's tide ;
He never made a brow look dark,
Nor caused a tear, but when he died.
No sorrow round his tomb should dwell :
More pleased his gay old ghost would be,
For funeral song, and passing bell,
To hear no sound but THREE TIMES THREE.

(*Hammering of knuckles and glasses and shouts of bravo !*)

Mr. Panscope. (*Suddenly emerging from a deep reverie.*)
I have heard, with the most profound attention, everything which the gentleman on the other side of the table has thought proper to advance on the subject of human deterioration ; and I must take the liberty to remark, that it augurs a very considerable degree of presumption in any individual, to set himself up against the *authority* of so many great men as may be marshalled in metaphysical phalanx under the opposite banners of the controversy ; such as Aristotle, Plato, the scholiast on Aristophanes, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Athanasius, Orpheus, Pindar, Simonides, Gronovius, Hemsterhusius, Longinus, Sir Isaac Newton, Thomas Paine, Doctor Paley, the King of Prussia, the King of Poland, Cicero, Monsieur Gautier, Hippocrates, Machiavelli, Milton, Colley Cibber, Bojardo, Gregory Nazianzenus, Locke, D'Alembert, Boccaccio, Daniel Defoe, Erasmus, Doctor Smollett, Zimmermann, Solomon, Confucius, Zoroaster, and Thomas-a-Kempis.

Mr. Escot. I presume, sir, you are one of those who value an *authority* more than a reason.

Mr. Panscope. The *authority*, sir, of all these great men, whose works, as well as the whole of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the entire series of the *Monthly Review*, the complete set of the *Variorum Classics*, and the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*, I have read through from beginning

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to end, deposes, with irrefragable refutation, against your ratiocinative speculations, wherein you seem desirous, by the futile process of analytical dialectics, to subvert the pyramidal structure of synthetically deduced opinions, which have withstood the secular revolutions of physiological disquisition, and which I maintain to be transcendently self-evident, categorically certain, and syllogistically demonstrable.

Squire Headlong. Bravo! Pass the bottle. The very best speech that ever was made.

Mr. Escot. It has only the slight disadvantage of being unintelligible.

Mr. Panscope. I am not obliged, sir, as Dr. Johnson observed on a similar occasion, to furnish you with an understanding.

Mr. Escot. I fear, sir, you would have some difficulty in furnishing me with such an article from your own stock.

Mr. Panscope. 'Sdeath, sir, do you question my understanding?

Mr. Escot. I only question, sir, where I expect a reply; which, from things that have no existence, I am not visionary enough to anticipate.

Mr. Panscope. I beg leave to observe, sir, that my language was perfectly perspicuous, and etymologically correct; and, I conceive, I have demonstrated what I shall now take the liberty to say in plain terms, that all your opinions are extremely absurd.

Mr. Escot. I should be sorry, sir, to advance any opinion that you would not think absurd.

Mr. Panscope. Death and fury, sir——

Mr. Escot. Say no more, sir. That apology is quite sufficient.

Mr. Panscope. Apology, sir?

Mr. Escot. Even so, sir. You have lost your temper, which I consider equivalent to a confession that you have the worst of the argument.

Mr. Panscope. Lightning and devils! sir——

Squire Headlong. No civil war!—Temperance, in the name of Bacchus!—A glee! a glee! *Music has charms to bend the knotted oak.* Sir Patrick, you'll join?

Sir Patrick O'Prism. Troth, with all my heart; for, by my soul, I'm bothered completely.

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Squire Headlong. Agreed, then; you, and I, and Chromatic. Bumpers! Come, strike up.

Squire Headlong, Mr. Chromatic, and Sir Patrick O'Prism, each holding a bumper, immediately vociferated the following

GLEE

A heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!
So fill me a bumper, a bumper of claret!
Let the bottle pass freely, don't shirk it nor spare it,
For a heeltap! a heeltap, I never could bear it!

No skylight! no twilight! while Bacchus rules o'er us:
No thinking! no shrinking! all drinking in chorus:
Let us moisten our clay, since 'tis thirsty and porous:
No thinking! no shrinking! all drinking in chorus!

GRAND CHORUS

By Squire Headlong, Mr. Chromatic, Sir Patrick O'Prism, Mr. Panscope, Mr. Jenkison, Mr. Gall, Mr. Treacle, Mr. Nightshade, Mr. Mac Laurel, Mr. Cranium, Mr. Milestone, and the Reverend Doctor Gaster.

A heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!
So fill me a bumper, a bumper of claret!
Let the bottle pass freely, don't shirk it nor spare it,
For a heeltap! a heeltap! I never could bear it!
'ΟΜΑΔΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΟΤΗΟΣ ΟΡΩΡΕΙ.'

The little butler now waddled in with a summons from the ladies to tea and coffee. The Squire was unwilling to leave his Burgundy. Mr. Escot strenuously urged the necessity of immediate adjournment, observing, that the longer they continued drinking the worse they should be. Mr. Foster seconded the motion, declaring the transition from the bottle to female society to be an indisputable amelioration of the state of the sensitive man. Mr. Jenkison allowed the Squire and his two brother philosophers to settle the point between them, concluding that he was just as well in one place as another. The question of adjournment was then put, and carried by a large majority.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVENING

MR. PANSCOPE, highly irritated by the cool contempt with which Mr. Escot had treated him, sat sipping his coffee and meditating revenge. He was not long in discovering the passion of his antagonist for the beautiful Cephalis, for whom he had himself a species of predilection ; and it was also obvious to him, that there was some lurking anger in the mind of her father, unfavourable to the hopes of his rival. The stimulus of revenge, superadded to that of preconceived inclination, determined him, after due deliberation, to *cut out* Mr. Escot in the young lady's favour. The practicability of this design he did not trouble himself to investigate ; for the havoc he had made in the hearts of some silly girls, who were extremely vulnerable to flattery, and who, not understanding a word he said, considered him a *prodigious clever man*, had impressed him with an unhesitating idea of his own irresistibility. He had not only the requisites already specified for fascinating female vanity, he could likewise fiddle with tolerable dexterity, though by no means so *quick* as Mr. Chromatic (for our readers are of course aware that rapidity of execution, not delicacy of expression, constitutes the scientific perfection of modern music), and could warble a fashionable love-ditty with considerable affectation of feeling : besides this, he was always extremely well dressed, and was heir-apparent to an estate of ten thousand a year. The influence which the latter consideration might have on the minds of the majority of his female acquaintance, whose morals had been formed by the novels of such writers as Miss Philomela Poppyseed, did not once enter into his calculation of his own personal attractions. Relying, therefore, on past success,



'Miss Philomela detailed to him the plan of a novel she was preparing for the press.'

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he determined *to appeal to his fortune*, and already, in imagination, considered himself sole lord and master of the affections of the beautiful Cephalis.

Mr. Escot and Mr. Foster were the only two of the party who had entered the library (to which the ladies had retired, and which was interior to the music-room) in a state of perfect sobriety. Mr. Escot had placed himself next to the beautiful Cephalis: Mr. Cranium had laid aside much of the terror of his frown; the short craniological conversation, which had passed between him and Mr. Escot, had softened his heart in his favour; and the copious libations of Burgundy in which he had indulged had smoothed his brow into unusual serenity.

Mr. Foster placed himself near the lovely Caprioletta, whose artless and innocent conversation had already made an impression on his susceptible spirit.

The Reverend Doctor Gaster seated himself in the corner of a sofa near Miss Philomela Poppyseed. Miss Philomela detailed to him the plan of a very moral and aristocratical novel she was preparing for the press, and continued holding forth, with her eyes half shut, till a long-drawn nasal tone from the reverend divine compelled her suddenly to open them in all the indignation of surprise. The cessation of the hum of her voice awakened the reverend gentleman, who, lifting up first one eyelid, then the other, articulated, or rather murmured, 'Admirably planned, indeed!'

'I have not quite finished, sir,' said Miss Philomela, bridling. 'Will you have the goodness to inform me where I left off?'

The doctor hummed a while, and at length answered: 'I think you had just laid it down as a position, that a thousand a year is an indispensable ingredient in the passion of love, and that no man, who is not so far gifted by *nature*, can reasonably presume to feel that passion himself, or be correctly the object of it with a well-educated female.'

'That, sir,' said Miss Philomela, highly incensed, 'is the fundamental principle which I lay down in the first chapter, and which the whole four volumes, of which I detailed to you the outline, are intended to set in a strong practical light.'

'Bless me!' said the doctor, 'what a nap I must have had!'

Miss Philomela flung away to the side of her dear friends Gall and Treacle, under whose fostering patronage she had

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been puffed into an extensive reputation, much to the advantage of the young ladies of the age, whom she taught to consider themselves as a sort of commodity, to be put up at public auction, and knocked down to the highest bidder. Mr. Nightshade and Mr. Mac Laurel joined the trio; and it was secretly resolved that Miss Philomela should furnish them with a portion of her manuscripts, and that Messieurs Gall & Co. should devote the following morning to cutting and drying a critique on a work calculated to prove so extensively beneficial, that Mr. Gall protested he really *envied* the writer.

While this amiable and enlightened quintetto were busily employed in flattering one another, Mr. Cranium retired to complete the preparations he had begun in the morning for a lecture, with which he intended, on some future evening, to favour the company: Sir Patrick O'Prism walked out into the grounds to study the effect of moonlight on the snow-clad mountains: Mr. Foster and Mr. Escot continued to make love, and Mr. Panscope to digest his plan of attack on the heart of Miss Cephalis: Mr. Jenkison sate by the fire, reading *Much Ado about Nothing*: the Reverend Doctor Gaster was still enjoying the benefit of Miss Philomela's opiate, and serenading the company from his solitary corner: Mr. Chromatic was reading music, and occasionally humming a note: and Mr. Milestone had produced his portfolio for the edification and amusement of Miss Tenorina, Miss Graziosa, and Squire Headlong, to whom he was pointing out the various beauties of his plan for Lord Littlebrain's park.

Mr. Milestone. This, you perceive, is the natural state of one part of the grounds. Here is a wood, never yet touched by the finger of taste; thick, intricate, and gloomy. Here is a little stream, dashing from stone to stone, and overshadowed with these untrimmed boughs.

Miss Tenorina. The sweet romantic spot! How beautifully the birds must sing there on a summer evening!

Miss Graziosa. Dear sister! how can you endure the horrid thicket?

Mr. Milestone. You are right, Miss Graziosa: your taste is correct—perfectly *en règle*. Now, here is the same place corrected—trimmed—polished—decorated—adorned. Here sweeps a plantation, in that beautiful regular curve: there winds a gravel walk: here are parts of the old wood, left in

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these majestic circular clumps, disposed at equal distances with wonderful symmetry: there are some single shrubs scattered in elegant profusion: here a Portugal laurel, there a juniper; here a laurustinus, there a spruce fir; here a larch, there a lilac; here a rhododendron, there an arbutus. The stream, you see, is become a canal: the banks are perfectly smooth and green, sloping to the water's edge: and there is Lord Littlebrain, rowing in an elegant boat.

Squire Headlong. Magical, faith!

Mr. Milestone. Here is another part of the grounds in its natural state. Here is a large rock, with the mountain-ash rooted in its fissures, overgrown, as you see, with ivy and moss: and from this part of it bursts a little fountain, that runs bubbling down its rugged sides.

Miss Tenorina. O how beautiful! How I should love the melody of that miniature cascade!

Mr. Milestone. Beautiful, Miss Tenorina! Hideous. Base, common, and popular. Such a thing as you may see anywhere, in wild and mountainous districts. Now, observe the metamorphosis. Here is the same rock, cut into the shape of a giant. In one hand he holds a horn, through which that little fountain is thrown to a prodigious elevation. In the other is a ponderous stone, so exactly balanced as to be apparently ready to fall on the head of any person who may happen to be beneath:¹ and there is Lord Littlebrain walking under it.

Squire Headlong. Miraculous, by Mahomet!

Mr. Milestone. This is the summit of a hill covered, as you perceive, with wood, and with those mossy stones scattered at random under the trees.

Miss Tenorina. What a delightful spot to read in, on a summer's day! The air must be so pure, and the wind must sound so divinely in the tops of those old pines!

Mr. Milestone. Bad taste, Miss Tenorina. Bad taste, I assure you. Here is the spot improved. The trees are cut down: the stones are cleared away: this is an octagonal pavilion, exactly on the centre of the summit: and there you see Lord Littlebrain, on the top of the pavilion, enjoying the prospect with a telescope.

Squire Headlong. Glorious, egad!

Mr. Milestone. Here is a rugged mountainous road,

¹ See Knight on Taste.

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leading through impervious shades : the ass and the four goats characterise a wild uncultured scene. Here, as you perceive, it is totally changed into a beautiful gravel-road, gracefully curving through a belt of limes : and there is Lord Littlebrain driving four-in-hand.

Squire Headlong. Egigious, by Jupiter !

Mr. Milestone. Here is Littlebrain Castle, a Gothic, moss-grown structure, half bosomed in trees. Near the casement of that turret is an owl peeping from the ivy.

Squire Headlong. And devilish wise he looks.

Mr. Milestone. Here is the new house, without a tree near it, standing in the midst of an undulating lawn : a white, polished, angular building, reflected to a nicety in this waveless lake : and there you see Lord Littlebrain looking out of the window.

Squire Headlong. And devilish wise he looks too. You shall cut me a giant before you go.

Mr. Milestone. Good. I'll order down my little corps of pioneers.

During this conversation, a hot dispute had arisen between Messieurs Gall and Nightshade ; the latter pertinaciously insisting on having his new poem reviewed by Treacle, who he knew would extol it most loftily, and not by Gall, whose sarcastic commendation he held in superlative horror. The remonstrances of Squire Headlong silenced the disputants, but did not mollify the inflexible Gall, nor appease the irritated Nightshade, who secretly resolved that, on his return to London, he would beat his drum in Grub Street, form a mastigophoric corps of his own, and hoist the standard of determined opposition against this critical Napoleon.

Sir Patrick O'Prism now entered, and, after some rapturous exclamations on the effect of the mountain-moonlight, entreated that one of the young ladies would favour him with a song. Miss Tenorina and Miss Graziosa now enchanted the company with some very scientific compositions, which, as usual, excited admiration and astonishment in every one, without a single particle of genuine pleasure. The beautiful Cephalis being then summoned to take her station at the harp, sang with feeling and simplicity the following air :—

THE EVENING

LOVE AND OPPORTUNITY

Oh ! who art thou, so swiftly flying ?
My name is Love, the child replied :
Swifter I pass than south winds sighing,
Or streams, through summer vales that glide.
And who art thou, his flight pursuing ?
'Tis cold Neglect whom now you see :
The little god you there are viewing
Will die, if once he's touched by me.

Oh ! who art thou so fast proceeding,
Ne'er glancing back thine eyes of flame ?
Marked but by few, through earth I'm speeding,
And Opportunity's my name.
What form is that, which scowls beside thee ?
Repentance is the form you see :
Learn then, the fate may yet betide thee :
She seizes them who seize not me.¹

The little butler now appeared with a summons to supper,
shortly after which the party dispersed for the night.

¹ This stanza is imitated from Machiavelli's *Capitolo dell' Occasione*.

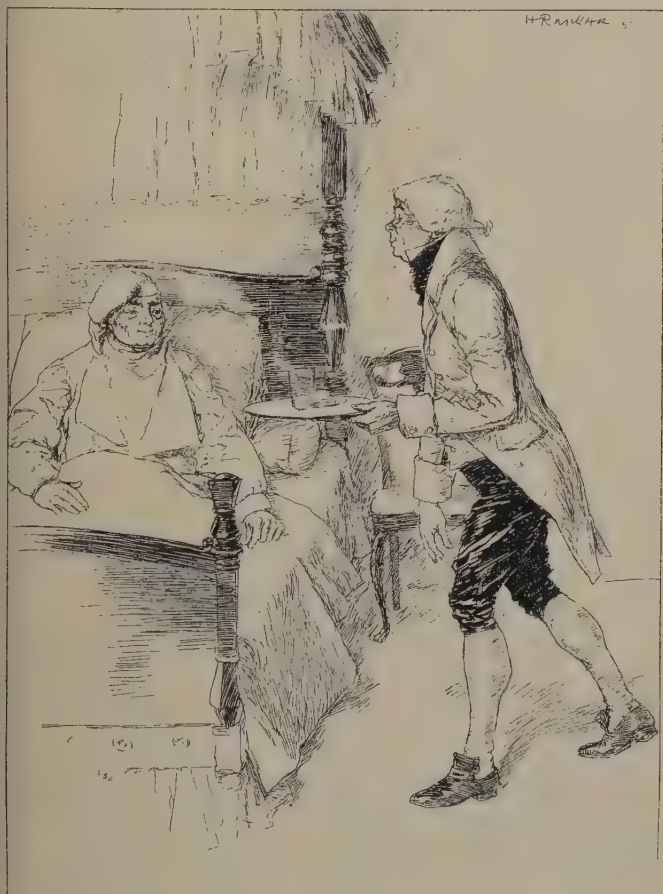
CHAPTER VII

THE WALK

IT was an old custom in Headlong Hall to have breakfast ready at eight, and continue it till two ; that the various guests might rise at their own hour, breakfast when they came down, and employ the morning as they thought proper ; the Squire only expecting that they should punctually assemble at dinner. During the whole of this period, the little butler stood sentinel at a side-table near the fire, copiously furnished with all the apparatus of tea, coffee, chocolate, milk, cream, eggs, rolls, toast, muffins, bread, butter, potted beef, cold fowl and partridge, ham, tongue, and anchovy. The Reverend Doctor Gaster found himself rather *queasy* in the morning, therefore preferred breakfasting in bed, on a mug of buttered ale and an anchovy toast. The three philosophers made their appearance at eight, and enjoyed *les prémices des dépouilles*. Mr. Foster proposed that, as it was a fine frosty morning, and they were all good pedestrians, they should take a walk to Tremadoc, to see the improvements carrying on in that vicinity. This being readily acceded to, they began their walk.

After their *départure* appeared Squire Headlong and Mr. Milestone, who agreed, over their muffin and partridge, to walk together to a ruined tower, within the precincts of the Squire's grounds, which Mr. Milestone thought he could improve.

The other guests dropped in by ones and twos, and made their respective arrangements for the morning. Mr. Panscope took a little ramble with Mr. Cranium, in the course of which the former professed a great enthusiasm for the science of craniology, and a great deal of love for the beautiful Cephalis,



'The Reverend Doctor Gaster preferred breakfasting in bed, on a mug of buttered ale and an anchovy toast.'

adding a few words about his expectations ; the old gentleman was unable to withstand this triple battery, and it was accordingly determined—after the manner of the heroic age, in which it was deemed superfluous to consult the opinions and feelings of the lady as to the manner in which she should be disposed of—that the lovely Miss Cranium should be made the happy bride of the accomplished Mr. Panscope. We shall leave them for the present to settle preliminaries, while we accompany the three philosophers in their walk to Tremadoc.

The vale contracted as they advanced, and, when they had passed the termination of the lake, their road wound along a narrow and romantic pass, through the middle of which an impetuous torrent dashed over vast fragments of stone. The pass was bordered on both sides by perpendicular rocks, broken into the wildest forms of fantastic magnificence.

‘These are, indeed,’ said Mr. Escot, ‘*confracti mundi rudera* :’¹ yet they must be feeble images of the valleys of the Andes, where the philosophic eye may contemplate, in their utmost extent, the effects of that tremendous convulsion which destroyed the perpendicularity of the poles, and inundated this globe with that torrent of physical evil, from which the greater torrent of moral evil has issued, that will continue to roll on, with an expansive power and an accelerated impetus, till the whole human race shall be swept away in its vortex.’

‘The precession of the equinoxes,’ said Mr. Foster, ‘will gradually ameliorate the physical state of our planet, till the ecliptic shall again coincide with the equator, and the equal diffusion of light and heat over the whole surface of the earth typify the equal and happy existence of man, who will then have attained the final step of pure and perfect intelligence.’

‘It is by no means clear,’ said Mr. Jenkison, ‘that the axis of the earth was ever perpendicular to the plane of its orbit, or that it ever will be so. Explosion and convulsion are necessary to the maintenance of either hypothesis : for La Place has demonstrated, that the precession of the equinoxes is only a secular equation of a very long period, which, of course, proves nothing either on one side or the other.’

They now emerged, by a winding ascent, from the vale of Llanberris, and after some little time arrived at Bedd Gelert. Proceeding through the sublimely romantic pass of Aberglas-

¹ Fragments of a demolished world.

lynn, their road led along the edge of Traeth Mawr, a vast arm of the sea, which they then beheld in all the magnificence of the flowing tide. Another five miles brought them to the embankment, which has since been completed, and which, by connecting the two counties of Meirionnydd and Caernarvon, excludes the sea from an extensive tract. The embankment, which was carried on at the same time from both the opposite coasts, was then very nearly meeting in the centre. They walked to the extremity of that part of it which was thrown out from the Caernarvonshire shore. The tide was now ebbing; it had filled the vast basin within, forming a lake about five miles in length and more than one in breadth. As they looked upwards with their backs to the open sea, they beheld a scene which no other in this country can parallel, and which the admirers of the magnificence of nature will ever remember with regret, whatever consolation may be derived from the probable utility of the works which have excluded the waters from their ancient receptacle. Vast rocks and precipices, intersected with little torrents, formed the barrier on the left: on the right, the triple summit of Moelwyn reared its majestic boundary: in the depth was that sea of mountains, the wild and stormy outline of the Snowdonian chain, with the giant Wyddfa towering in the midst. The mountain-frame remains unchanged, unchangeable: but the liquid mirror it enclosed is gone.

The tide ebbed with rapidity: the waters within, retained by the embankment, poured through its two points an impetuous cataract, curling and boiling in innumerable eddies, and making a tumultuous melody admirably in unison with the surrounding scene. The three philosophers looked on in silence; and at length unwillingly turned away, and proceeded to the little town of Tremadoc, which is built on land recovered in a similar manner from the sea. After inspecting the manufactories, and refreshing themselves at the inn on a cold saddle of mutton and a bottle of sherry, they retraced their steps towards Headlong Hall, commenting as they went on the various objects they had seen.

Mr. Escot. I regret that time did not allow us to see the caves on the sea-shore. There is one of which the depth is said to be unknown. There is a tradition in the country, that an adventurous fiddler once resolved to explore it; that he

entered, and never returned ; but that the subterranean sound of a fiddle was heard at a farm-house seven miles inland. It is, therefore, concluded that he lost his way in the labyrinth of caverns, supposed to exist under the rocky soil of this part of the country.

Mr. Jenkison. A supposition that must always remain in force, unless a second fiddler, equally adventurous and more successful, should return with an accurate report of the true state of the fact.

Mr. Foster. What think you of the little colony we have just been inspecting ; a city, as it were, in its cradle ?

Mr. Escot. With all the weakness of infancy, and all the vices of maturer age. I confess, the sight of those manufactories, which have suddenly sprung up, like fungous excrescences, in the bosom of these wild and desolate scenes, impressed me with as much horror and amazement as the sudden appearance of the stocking manufactory struck into the mind of Rousseau, when, in a lonely valley of the Alps, he had just congratulated himself on finding a spot where man had never been.

Mr. Foster. The manufacturing system is not yet purified from some evils which necessarily attend it, but which I conceive are greatly overbalanced by their concomitant advantages. Contemplate the vast sum of human industry to which this system so essentially contributes : seas covered with vessels, ports resounding with life, profound researches, scientific inventions, complicated mechanism, canals carried over deep valleys, and through the bosoms of hills : employment and existence thus given to innumerable families, and the multiplied comforts and conveniences of life diffused over the whole community.

Mr. Escot. You present to me a complicated picture of artificial life, and require me to admire it. Seas covered with vessels : every one of which contains two or three tyrants, and from fifty to a thousand slaves, ignorant, gross, perverted, and active only in mischief. Ports resounding with life : in other words, with noise and drunkenness, the mingled din of avarice, intemperance, and prostitution. Profound researches, scientific inventions : to what end ? To contract the sum of human wants ? to teach the art of living on a little ? to disseminate independence, liberty, and health ? No ; to multiply factitious

desires, to stimulate depraved appetites, to invent unnatural wants, to heap up incense on the shrine of luxury, and accumulate expedients of selfish and ruinous profusion. Complicated machinery : behold its blessings. Twenty years ago, at the door of every cottage sate the good woman with her spinning-wheel : the children, if not more profitably employed than in gathering heath and sticks, at least laid in a stock of health and strength to sustain the labours of maturer years. Where is the spinning-wheel now, and every simple and insulated occupation of the industrious cottager? Wherever this boasted machinery is established, the children of the poor are death-doomed from their cradles. Look for one moment at midnight into a cotton-mill, amidst the smell of oil, the smoke of lamps, the rattling of wheels, the dizzy and complicated motions of diabolical mechanism : contemplate the little human machines that keep play with the revolutions of the iron work, robbed at that hour of their natural rest, as of air and exercise by day : observe their pale and ghastly features, more ghastly in that baleful and malignant light, and tell me if you do not fancy yourself on the threshold of Virgil's hell, where

Continuò auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
Infantumque animæ flentes, in limine primo,
 Quos *dulcis vitæ exsortes*, et ab ubere raptos,
Abstulit atra dies, et FUNERE MERSIT ACERBO !

As Mr. Escot said this, a little rosy-cheeked girl, with a basket of heath on her head, came tripping down the side of one of the rocks on the left. The force of contrast struck even on the phlegmatic spirit of Mr. Jenkison, and he almost inclined for a moment to the doctrine of deterioration. Mr. Escot continued :

Nor is the lot of the parents more enviable. Sedentary victims of unhealthy toil, they have neither the corporeal energy of the savage, nor the mental acquisitions of the civilised man. Mind, indeed, they have none, and scarcely animal life. They are mere automata, component parts of the enormous machines which administer to the pampered appetites of the few, who consider themselves the most valuable portion of a state, because they consume in indolence the fruits of the earth, and contribute nothing to the benefit of the community.

Mr. Jenkison. That these are evils cannot be denied ; but they have their counterbalancing advantages. That a man should pass the day in a furnace and the night in a cellar, is bad for the individual, but good for others who enjoy the benefit of his labour.

Mr. Escot. By what right do they so ?

Mr. Jenkison. By the right of all property and all possession : *le droit du plus fort.*

Mr. Escot. Do you justify that principle ?

Mr. Jenkison. I neither justify nor condemn it. It is practically recognised in all societies ; and, though it is certainly the source of enormous evil, I conceive it is also the source of abundant good, or it would not have so many supporters.

Mr. Escot. That is by no means a consequence. Do we not every day see men supporting the most enormous evils, which they know to be so with respect to others, and which in reality are so with respect to themselves, though an erroneous view of their own miserable self-interest induces them to think otherwise ?

Mr. Jenkison. Good and evil exist only as they are perceived. I cannot therefore understand how that which a man perceives to be good can be in reality an evil to him : indeed, the word *reality* only signifies *strong belief*.

Mr. Escot. The views of such a man I contend are false. If he could be made to see the truth——

Mr. Jenkison. He sees his own truth. Truth is that which a man *troweth*. Where there is no man there is no truth. Thus the truth of one is not the truth of another.¹

Mr. Foster. I am aware of the etymology ; but I contend that there is an universal and immutable truth, deducible from the nature of things.

Mr. Jenkison. By whom deducible ? Philosophers have investigated the nature of things for centuries, yet no two of them will agree in *trowing* the same conclusion.

Mr. Foster. The progress of philosophical investigation, and the rapidly-increasing accuracy of human knowledge, approximate by degrees the diversities of opinion ; so that, in process of time, moral science will be susceptible of mathematical demonstration ; and, clear and indisputable principles

¹ Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*.

HEADLONG HALL

being universally recognised, the coincidence of deduction will necessarily follow.

Mr. Escot. Possibly when the inroads of luxury and disease shall have exterminated nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine of every million of the human race, the remaining fractional units may congregate into one point, and come to something like the same conclusion.

Mr. Jenkison. I doubt it much. I conceive, if only we three were survivors of the whole system of terrestrial being, we should never agree in our decisions as to the cause of the calamity.

Mr. Escot. Be that as it may, I think you must at least assent to the following positions: that the many are sacrificed to the few; that ninety-nine in a hundred are occupied in a perpetual struggle for the preservation of a perilous and precarious existence, while the remaining one wallows in all the redundancies of luxury that can be wrung from their labours and privations; that luxury and liberty are incompatible; and that every new want you invent for civilised man is a new instrument of torture for him who cannot indulge it.

They had now regained the shores of the lake, when the conversation was suddenly interrupted by a tremendous explosion, followed by a violent splashing of water, and various sounds of tumult and confusion, which induced them to quicken their pace towards the spot whence they proceeded.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TOWER

IN all the thoughts, words, and actions of Squire Headlong, there was a remarkable alacrity of progression, which almost annihilated the interval between conception and execution. He was utterly regardless of obstacles, and seemed to have expunged their very name from his vocabulary. His designs were never nipped in their infancy by the contemplation of those trivial difficulties which often turn awry the current of enterprise ; and, though the rapidity of his movements was sometimes arrested by a more formidable barrier, either naturally existing in the pursuit he had undertaken, or created by his own impetuosity, he seldom failed to succeed either in knocking it down or cutting his way through it. He had little idea of gradation : he saw no interval between the first step and the last, but pounced upon his object with the impetus of a mountain cataract. This rapidity of movement, indeed, subjected him to some disasters which cooler spirits would have escaped. He was an excellent sportsman, and almost always killed his game ; but now and then he killed his dog.¹ Rocks, streams, hedges, gates, and ditches were objects of no account in his estimation ; though a dislocated shoulder, several severe bruises, and two or three narrow escapes for

¹ Some readers will, perhaps, recollect the Archbishop of Prague, who also was an excellent sportsman, and who,

Com' era scritto in certi suoi giornali,
Ucciso avea con le sue proprie mani
Un numero infinito d' animali :
Cinquemila con quindici fagiani,
Seimila lepri, ottantatrè cignali,
E per disgrazia, ancor *tredici cani*, etc.

HEADLONG HALL

his neck, might have been expected to teach him a certain degree of caution in effecting his transitions. He was so singularly alert in climbing precipices and traversing torrents, that, when he went out on a shooting party, he was very soon left to continue his sport alone, for he was sure to dash up or down some nearly perpendicular path, where no one else had either ability or inclination to follow. He had a pleasure boat on the lake, which he steered with amazing dexterity; but as he always indulged himself in the utmost possible latitude of sail, he was occasionally upset by a sudden gust, and was indebted to his skill in the art of swimming for the opportunity of tempering with a copious libation of wine the unnatural frigidity introduced into his stomach by the extraordinary intrusion of water, an element which he had religiously determined should never pass his lips, but of which, on these occasions, he was sometimes compelled to swallow no inconsiderable quantity. This circumstance alone, of the various disasters that befell him, occasioned him any permanent affliction, and he accordingly noted the day in his pocket-book as a *dies nefastus*, with this simple abstract, and brief chronicle of the calamity: *Mem. Swallowed two or three pints of water*: without any notice whatever of the concomitant circumstances. These days, of which there were several, were set apart in Headlong Hall for the purpose of anniversary expiation; and, as often as the day returned on which the Squire had swallowed water, he not only made a point of swallowing a treble allowance of wine himself, but imposed a heavy mulct on every one of his servants who should be detected in a state of sobriety after sunset: but their conduct on these occasions was so uniformly exemplary, that no instance of the infliction of the penalty appears on record.

The Squire and Mr. Milestone, as we have already said, had set out immediately after breakfast to examine the capabilities of the scenery. The object that most attracted Mr. Milestone's admiration was a ruined tower on a projecting point of rock, almost totally overgrown with ivy. This ivy, Mr. Milestone observed, required trimming and clearing in various parts: a little pointing and polishing was also necessary for the dilapidated walls: and the whole effect would be materially increased by a plantation of spruce fir, interspersed with cypress and juniper, the present rugged and broken



'He was occasionally upset by a sudden gust.'

ascent from the land side being first converted into a beautiful slope, which might be easily effected by blowing up a part of the rock with gunpowder, laying on a quantity of fine mould, and covering the whole with an elegant stratum of turf.

Squire Headlong caught with avidity at this suggestion ; and, as he had always a store of gunpowder in the house, for the accommodation of himself and his shooting visitors, and for the supply of a small battery of cannon, which he kept for his private amusement, he insisted on commencing operations immediately. Accordingly, he bounded back to the house, and very speedily returned, accompanied by the little butler, and half a dozen servants and labourers, with pickaxes and gunpowder, a hanging stove and a poker, together with a basket of cold meat and two or three bottles of Madeira : for the Squire thought, with many others, that a copious supply of provision is a very necessary ingredient in all rural amusements.

Mr. Milestone superintended the proceedings. The rock was excavated, the powder introduced, the apertures strongly blockaded with fragments of stone : a long train was laid to a spot which Mr. Milestone fixed on as sufficiently remote from the possibility of harm : the Squire seized the poker, and, after flourishing it in the air with a degree of dexterity which induced the rest of the party to leave him in solitary possession of an extensive circumference, applied the end of it to the train ; and the rapidly-communicated ignition ran hissing along the surface of the soil.

At this critical moment, Mr. Cranium and Mr. Panscope appeared at the top of the tower, which, unseeing and unseen, they had ascended on the opposite side to that where the Squire and Mr. Milestone were conducting their operations. Their sudden appearance a little dismayed the Squire, who, however, comforted himself with the reflection that the tower was perfectly safe, or at least was intended to be so, and that his friends were in no probable danger but of a knock on the head from a flying fragment of stone.

The succession of these thoughts in the mind of the Squire was commensurate in rapidity to the progress of the ignition, which having reached its extremity, the explosion took place, and the shattered rock was hurled into the air in the midst of fire and smoke.

Mr. Milestone had properly calculated the force of the explosion ; for the tower remained untouched : but the Squire, in his consolatory reflections, had omitted the consideration of the influence of sudden fear, which had so violent an effect on Mr. Cranium, who was just commencing a speech concerning the very fine prospect from the top of the tower, that, cutting short the thread of his observations, he bounded, under the elastic influence of terror, several feet into the air. His ascent being unluckily a little out of the perpendicular, he descended with a proportionate curve from the apex of his projection, and alighted not on the wall of the tower, but in an ivy-bush by its side, which, giving way beneath him, transferred him to a tuft of hazel at its base, which, after upholding him an instant, consigned him to the boughs of an ash that had rooted itself in a fissure about half-way down the rock, which finally transmitted him to the waters below.

Squire Headlong anxiously watched the tower as the smoke which at first enveloped it rolled away ; but when this shadowy curtain was withdrawn, and Mr. Panscope was discovered, *solus*, in a tragical attitude, his apprehensions became boundless, and he concluded that the unlucky collision of a flying fragment of rock had indeed emancipated the spirit of the craniologist from its terrestrial bondage.

Mr. Escot had considerably outstripped his companions, and arrived at the scene of the disaster just as Mr. Cranium, being utterly destitute of natatorial skill, was in imminent danger of final submersion. The deteriorationist, who had cultivated this valuable art with great success, immediately plunged in to his assistance, and brought him alive and in safety to a shelving part of the shore. Their landing was hailed with a view-holla from the delighted Squire, who, shaking them both heartily by the hand, and making ten thousand lame apologies to Mr. Cranium, concluded by asking, in a pathetic tone, *How much water he had swallowed* ; and without waiting for his answer, filled a large tumbler with Madeira, and insisted on his tossing it off, which was no sooner said than done. Mr. Jenkison and Mr. Foster now made their appearance. Mr. Panscope descended the tower, which he vowed never again to approach within a quarter of a mile. The tumbler of Madeira was replenished, and handed round to recruit the spirits of the party, which now began to move towards Headlong Hall, the



'Consigned him to the boughs of an ash.'

THE TOWER

Squire capering for joy in the van, and the little fat butler waddling in the rear.

The Squire took care that Mr. Cranium should be seated next to him at dinner, and plied him so hard with Madeira to prevent him, as he said, from taking cold, that long before the ladies sent in their summons to coffee, every organ in his brain was in a complete state of revolution, and the Squire was under the necessity of ringing for three or four servants to carry him to bed, observing, with a smile of great satisfaction, that he was in a very excellent way for escaping any ill consequences that might have resulted from his accident.

The beautiful Cephalis, being thus freed from his *surveillance*, was enabled, during the course of the evening, to develop to his preserver the full extent of her gratitude.



CHAPTER IX

THE SEXTON

MR. ESCOT passed a sleepless night, the ordinary effect of love, according to some amatory poets, who seem to have composed their whining ditties for the benevolent purpose of bestowing on others that gentle slumber of which they so pathetically lament the privation. The deteriorationist entered into a profound moral soliloquy, in which he first examined *whether a philosopher ought to be in love*. Having decided this point affirmatively against Plato and Lucretius, he next examined, *whether that passion ought to have the effect of keeping a philosopher awake*. Having decided this negatively, he resolved to go to sleep immediately : not being able to accomplish this to his satisfaction, he tossed and tumbled, like Achilles or Orlando, first on one side, then on the other ; repeated to himself several hundred lines of poetry ; counted a thousand ; began again, and counted another thousand : in vain : the beautiful Cephalis was the predominant image in all his soliloquies, in all his repetitions : even in the numerical process from which he sought relief, he did but associate the idea of number with that of his dear tormentor, till she appeared to his mind's eye in a thousand similitudes, distinct, not different. These thousand images, indeed, were but one ; and yet the one was a thousand, a sort of uni-multiplex phantasma, which will be very intelligible to some understandings.

He arose with the first peep of day, and sallied forth to enjoy the balmy breeze of morning, which any but a lover might have thought too cool ; for it was an intense frost, the sun had not risen, and the wind was rather fresh from north-east and by north. But a lover, who, like Ladurlad in the

THE SEXTON

Curse of Kchama, always has, or at least is supposed to have, 'a fire in his heart and a fire in his brain,' feels a wintry breeze from N.E. and by N. steal over his cheek like the south over a bank of violets; therefore, on walked the philosopher, with his coat unbuttoned and his hat in his hand, careless of whither he went, till he found himself near the enclosure of a little mountain chapel. Passing through the wicket, and stepping over two or three graves, he stood on a rustic tombstone, and peeped through the chapel window, examining the interior with as much curiosity as if he had 'forgotten what the inside of a church was made of,' which, it is rather to be feared, was the case. Before him and beneath him were the font, the altar, and the grave; which gave rise to a train of moral reflections on the three great epochs in the course of the *featherless biped*,—birth, marriage, and death. The middle stage of the process arrested his attention; and his imagination placed before him several figures, which he thought, with the addition of his own, would make a very picturesque group; the beautiful Cephalis, 'arrayed in her bridal apparel of white'; her friend Caprioletta officiating as bridesmaid; Mr. Cranium giving her away; and, last, not least, the Reverend Doctor Gaster, intoning the marriage ceremony with the regular orthodox allowance of nasal recitative. Whilst he was feasting his eyes on this imaginary picture, the demon of mistrust insinuated himself into the storehouse of his conceptions, and, removing his figure from the group, substituted that of Mr. Panscope, which gave such a violent shock to his feelings, that he suddenly exclaimed, with an extraordinary elevation of voice, Οἱμοι κακοδαιμων, και τρις κακοδαιμων, και τετρακις, και πεντακις, και δωδεκακις, και μυριακις! ¹ to the great terror of the sexton, who was just entering the churchyard, and, not knowing from whence the voice proceeded, *pensa que fut un diableteau*. The sight of the philosopher dispelled his apprehensions, when, growing suddenly valiant, he immediately addresséd him:—

'Cot pless your honour, I shouldn't have thought of meeting any pody here at this time of the morning, except, look you, it was the tevil—who, to pe sure, toes not often come upon consecrated cround—put for all that, I think I have seen him now and then, in former tays, when old Nanny Llwyd of Llyn-

¹ Me miserable! and thrice miserable! and four times, and five times, and twelve times, and ten thousand times miserable!

isa was living—Cot teliver us! a terriple old witch to pe sure she was—I tidn't much like tiggig her crave—put I prought two cocks with me—the tevil hates cocks—and tied them py the leg on two tombstones—and I tug, and the cocks crowed, and the tevil kept at a tistance. To pe sure now, if I hadn't peen very prave py nature—as I ought to pe truly—for my father was Owen Ap-Llwyd Ap-Gryffydd Ap-Shenkin Ap-Williams Ap-Thomas Ap-Morgan Ap-Parry Ap-Evan Ap-Rhys, a coot preacher and a lover of *carw*¹—I should have thought just now pefore I saw your honour, that the foice I heard was the tevil's calling Nanny Llwyd—Cot pless us! to pe sure she should have been puried in the middle of the river, where the tevil can't come, as your honour fery well knows.'

'I am perfectly aware of it,' said Mr. Escot.

'True, true,' continued the sexton; 'put to pe sure, Owen Thomas of Morfa-Bach will have it that one summer evening—when he went over to Cwm Cynfael in Meirionnydd, apout some cattles he wanted to puy—he saw a strange figure—pless us!—with five horns!—Cot save us! sitting on Hugh Llwyd's pulpit, which, your honour fery well knows, is a pig rock in the middle of the river——'

'Of course he was mistaken,' said Mr. Escot.

'To pe sure he was,' said the sexton. 'For there is no toubt put the tevil, when Owen Thomas saw him, must have peen sitting on a piece of rock in a straight line from him on the other side of the river, where he used to sit, look you, for a whole summer's tay, while Hugh Llwyd was on his pulpit, and there they used to talk across the water! for Hugh Llwyd, please your honour, never raised the tevil except when he was safe in the middle of the river, which proves that Owen Thomas, in his fright, tidn't pay proper attention to the exact spot where the tevil was.'

The sexton concluded his speech with an approving smile at his own sagacity in so luminously expounding the nature of Owen Thomas's mistake.

'I perceive,' said Mr. Escot, 'you have a very deep insight into things, and can, therefore, perhaps, facilitate the resolution of a question, concerning which, though I have little doubt on the subject, I am desirous of obtaining the most extensive and accurate information.'

¹ Pronounced cooroo—the Welsh word for *ale*.



*'A skull of very extraordinary magnitude, which he swore by St. David
was the skull of Cadwallader.'*

THE SEXTON

The sexton scratched his head, the language of Mr. Escot not being to his apprehension quite so luminous as his own.

'You have been sexton here,' continued Mr. Escot, in the language of Hamlet, 'man and boy, forty years.'

The sexton turned pale. The period Mr. Escot named was so nearly the true one, that he began to suspect the personage before him of being rather too familiar with Hugh Llwyd's sable visitor. Recovering himself a little, he said, 'Why, thereapouts, sure enough.'

'During this period, you have of course dug up many bones of the people of ancient times.'

'Pones ! Cot pless you, yes ! pones as old as the 'orlt.'

'Perhaps you can show me a few.'

The sexton grinned horribly a ghastly smile. 'Will you take your Pible oath you ton't want them to raise the tevil with ?'

'Willingly,' said Mr. Escot, smiling ; 'I have an abstruse reason for the inquiry.'

'Why, if you have an *obtuse* reason,' said the sexton, who thought this a good opportunity to show that he could pronounce hard words as well as other people ; 'if you have an *obtuse* reason, that alters the case.'

So saying he led the way to the bone-house, from which he began to throw out various bones and skulls of more than common dimensions, and amongst them a skull of very extraordinary magnitude, which he swore by St. David was the skull of Cadwallader.

'How do you know this to be his skull ?' said Mr. Escot.

'He was the piggest man that ever lived, and he was puried here ; and this is the piggest skull I ever found : you see now——'

'Nothing can be more logical,' said Mr. Escot. 'My good friend, will you allow me to take this skull away with me ?'

'St. Winifred pless us !' exclaimed the sexton, 'would you have me haunted by his chost for taking his plessed pones out of consecrated cround ? Would you have him come in the tead of the night, and fly away with the roof of my house ? Would you have all the crop of my carden come to nothing ? for, look you, his epitaph says,

"He that my pones shall ill prestow,
Leek in his cround shall never crow."

HEADLONG HALL

‘You will ill bestow them,’ said Mr. Escot, ‘in confounding them with those of the sons of little men, the degenerate dwarfs of later generations; you will well bestow them in giving them to me: for I will have this illustrious skull bound with a silver rim, and filled with mantling wine, with this inscription, NUNC TANDEM: signifying that that pernicious liquor has at length found its proper receptacle; for, when the wine is in, the brain is out.’

Saying these words, he put a dollar into the hands of the sexton, who instantly stood spell-bound by the talismanic influence of the coin, while Mr. Escot walked off in triumph with the skull of Cadwallader.



'Miss Tenorina, starting up in great haste and terror, caused the subversion of a cup of chocolate.'

CHAPTER X

THE SKULL

WHEN Mr. Escot entered the breakfast-room he found the majority of the party assembled, and the little butler very active at his station. Several of the ladies shrieked at the sight of the skull; and Miss Tenorina, starting up in great haste and terror, caused the subversion of a cup of chocolate, which a servant was handing to the Reverend Doctor Gaster, into the nape of the neck of Sir Patrick O'Prism. Sir Patrick, rising impetuously, *to clap an extinguisher*, as he expressed himself, *on the farthing rushlight of the rascal's life*, pushed over the chair of Marinaduke Milestone, Esquire, who, catching for support at the first thing that came in his way, which happened unluckily to be the corner of the table-cloth, drew it instantaneously with him to the floor, involving plates, cups and saucers, in one promiscuous ruin. But, as the principal *matériel* of the breakfast apparatus was on the little butler's side-table, the confusion occasioned by this accident was happily greater than the damage. Miss Tenorina was so agitated that she was obliged to retire: Miss Graziosa accompanied her through pure sisterly affection and sympathy, not without a lingering look at Sir Patrick, who likewise retired to change his coat, but was very expeditious in returning to resume his attack on the cold partridge. The broken cups were cleared away, the cloth relaid, and the array of the table restored with wonderful celerity.

Mr. Escot was a little surprised at the scene of confusion which signalised his entrance; but, perfectly unconscious that it originated with the skull of Cadwallader, he advanced to seat himself at the table by the side of the beautiful Cephalis, first

placing the skull in a corner, out of the reach of Mr. Cranium, who sate eyeing it with lively curiosity, and, after several efforts to restrain his impatience, exclaimed, 'You seem to have found a rarity.'

'A rarity indeed,' said Mr. Escot, cracking an egg as he spoke; 'no less than the genuine and indubitable skull of Cadwallader.'

'The skull of Cadwallader!' vociferated Mr. Cranium; 'O treasure of treasures!'

Mr. Escot then detailed by what means he had become possessed of it, which gave birth to various remarks from the other individuals of the party: after which, rising from table, and taking the skull again in his hand,

'This skull,' said he, 'is the skull of a hero, *παλαι κατα-τεθνεωτος*,¹ and sufficiently demonstrates a point, concerning which I never myself entertained a doubt, that the human race is undergoing a gradual process of diminution in length, breadth, and thickness. Observe this skull. Even the skull of our reverend friend, which is the largest and thickest in the company, is not more than half its size. The frame this skull belonged to could scarcely have been less than nine feet high. Such is the lamentable progress of degeneracy and decay. In the course of ages, a boot of the present generation would form an ample chateau for a large family of our remote posterity. The mind, too, participates in the contraction of the body. Poets and philosophers of all ages and nations have lamented this too visible process of physical and moral deterioration. "The sons of little men," says Ossian. "*Οἱ τοὶ νῦν βροτοὶ εἰσιν*," says Homer: "such men as live in these degenerate days." "All things," says Virgil,² "have a retrocessive tendency, and grow worse and worse by the inevitable doom of fate." "We live in the ninth age," says Juvenal,³ "an age worse than the age of iron; nature has no metal sufficiently pernicious to give a denomination to its wickedness." "Our fathers," says Horace,⁴ "worse than our grandfathers, have given birth to us, their more vicious progeny, who, in our turn, shall become the parents of a still viler generation." You all know the fable of the buried Pict, who bit off the end of a pickaxe, with which sacrilegious hands

¹ Long since dead.

³ *Sat.* xiii. 28.

² *Georg.* i. 199.

⁴ *Carm.* iii. 6, 46.

were breaking open his grave, and called out with a voice like subterranean thunder, *I perceive the degeneracy of your race by the smallness of your little finger!* videlicet, the pickaxe. This, to be sure, is a fiction; but it shows the prevalent opinion, the feeling, the conviction, of absolute, universal, irremediable deterioration.'

'I should be sorry, said Mr. Foster, 'that such an opinion should become universal, independently of my conviction of its fallacy. Its general admission would tend, in a great measure, to produce the very evils it appears to lament. What could be its effect, but to check the ardour of investigation, to extinguish the zeal of philanthropy, to freeze the current of enterprising hope, to bury in the torpor of scepticism and in the stagnation of despair every better faculty of the human mind, which will necessarily become retrograde in ceasing to be progressive?'

'I am inclined to think, on the contrary,' said Mr. Escot, 'that the deterioration of man is accelerated by his blindness—in many respects wilful blindness—to the truth of the fact itself, and to the causes which produce it; that there is no hope whatever of ameliorating his condition but in a total and radical change of the whole scheme of human life, and that the advocates of his indefinite perfectibility are in reality the greatest enemies to the practical possibility of their own system, by so strenuously labouring to impress on his attention that he is going on in a good way, while he is really in a deplorably bad one.'

'I admit,' said Mr. Foster, 'there are many things that may, and therefore will, be changed for the better.'

'Not on the present system,' said Mr. Escot, 'in which every change is for the worse.'

'In matters of taste I am sure it is,' said Mr. Gall: 'there is, in fact, no such thing as good taste left in the world.'

'O, Mr. Gall!' said Miss Philomela Poppyseed, 'I thought my novel ——'

'My paintings,' said Sir Patrick O'Prism——

'My ode,' said Mr. Mac Laurel ——

'My ballad,' said Mr. Nightshade——

'My plan for Lord Littlebrain's park,' said Marmaduke Milestone, Esquire——

'My essay,' said Mr. Treacle——

HEADLONG HALL

‘My sonata,’ said Mr. Chromatic——

‘My claret,’ said Squire Headlong ——

‘My lectures,’ said Mr. Cranium——

‘Vanity of vanities,’ said the Reverend Doctor Gaster, turning down an empty egg-shell; ‘all is vanity and vexation of spirit.’

CHAPTER XI

THE ANNIVERSARY

AMONG the *dies albæ cretæ notandos*, which the beau monde of the Cambrian mountains was in the habit of remembering with the greatest pleasure, and anticipating with the most lively satisfaction, was the Christmas ball which the ancient family of the Headlongs had been accustomed to give from time immemorial. Tradition attributed the honour of its foundation to Headlong Ap-Headlong Ap-Breakneck Ap-Headlong Ap-Cataract Ap-Pistyll¹ Ap-Rhaidr Ap-Headlong, who lived about the time of the Trojan war. Certain it is, at least, that a grand chorus was always sung after supper in honour of this illustrious ancestor of the Squire. This ball was, indeed, an æra in the lives of all the beauty and fashion of Caernarvon, Meirionnydd, and Anglesea, and, like the Greek Olympiads and the Roman consulates, served as the main pillar of memory, round which all the events of the year were suspended and entwined. Thus, in recalling to mind any circumstance imperfectly recollected, the principal point to be ascertained was, whether it had occurred in the year of the first, second, third, or fourth ball of Headlong Ap-Breakneck, or Headlong Ap-Torrent, or Headlong Ap-Hurricane; and, this being satisfactorily established, the remainder followed of course in the natural order of its ancient association.

This eventful anniversary being arrived, every chariot, coach, barouche and barouchette, landau and landaulet, chaise, curicle, buggy, whiskey, and tilbury, of the three counties, was in motion: not a horse was left idle within five miles of any gentleman's seat, from the high-mettled hunter to the heath-

¹ Pistyll, in Welsh, signifies a cataract, and Rhaidr a cascade.

cropping galloway The ferrymen of the Menai were at their stations before daybreak, taking a double allowance of rum and *cwrw* to strengthen them for the fatigues of the day. The ivied towers of Caernarvon, the romantic woods of Tan-y-bwlch, the heathy hills of Kernioggau, the sandy shores of Tremadoc, the mountain-recesses of Bedd-Gelert, and the lonely lakes of



'The mountain recesses of Bedd-Gelert, and the lonely lakes of Capel Cerig, re-echoed to the voices of the delighted ostlers and postilions.'

Capel Cerig, re-echoed to the voices of the delighted ostlers and postilions, who reaped on this happy day their wintry harvest. Landlords and landladies, waiters, chambermaids, and toll-gate keepers, roused themselves from the torpidity which the last solitary tourist, flying with the yellow leaves on the wings of the autumnal wind, had left them to enjoy till the returning spring : the bustle of August was renewed on all the

mountain roads, and, in the meanwhile, Squire Headlong and his little fat butler carried most energetically into effect the lessons of the *savant* in the Court of Quintessence, *qui par engin mirifique jectoit les maisons par les fenestres*.¹

It was the custom for the guests to assemble at dinner on the day of the ball, and depart on the following morning after breakfast. Sleep during this interval was out of the question : the ancient harp of Cambria suspended the celebration of the noble race of Shenkin, and the songs of Hoel and Cyveilioc, to ring to the profaner but more lively modulation of *Voulez vous danser, Mademoiselle ?* in conjunction with the symphonious scraping of fiddles, the tinkling of triangles, and the beating of tambourines. Comus and Momus were the deities of the night ; and Bacchus of course was not forgotten by the male part of the assembly (with them, indeed, a ball was invariably a scene of ‘*tipsy dance and jollity*’) : the servants flew about with wine and negus, and the little butler was indefatigable with his corkscrew, which is reported on one occasion to have grown so hot under the influence of perpetual friction that it actually set fire to the cork.

The company assembled. The dinner, which on this occasion was a secondary object, was despatched with uncommon celerity. When the cloth was removed, and the bottle had taken its first round, Mr. Cranium stood up and addressed the company.

‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ said he, ‘the golden key of mental phenomena, which has lain buried for ages in the deepest vein of the mine of physiological research, is now, by a happy combination of practical and speculative investigations, grasped, if I may so express myself, firmly and inexcusably, in the hands of physiognomical empiricism.’ The Cambrian visitors listened with profound attention, not comprehending a single syllable he said, but concluding he would finish his speech by proposing the health of Squire Headlong. The gentlemen accordingly tossed off their heeltaps, and Mr. Cranium proceeded : ‘Ardently desirous, to the extent of my feeble capacity, of disseminating as much as possible the inexhaustible treasures to which this golden key admits the humblest votary of philosophical truth, I invite you, when you have sufficiently restored, replenished, refreshed, and exhilarated that osteosarchæmato-

¹ Rabelais.

splanchnochondroneuromuelous, or to employ a more intelligible term, osseocarnisanguineoviscericartilaginonervomedullary, *compages*, or shell, the body, which at once envelops and develops that mysterious and inestimable kernel, the desiderative, determinative, ratiocinative, imaginative, inquisitive, appetitive, comparative, reminiscent, congeries of ideas and notions, simple and compound, comprised in the comprehensive denomination of mind, to take a peep with me into the mechanical arcana of the anatomico-metaphysical universe. Being not in the least dubitative of your spontaneous compliance, I proceed,' added he, suddenly changing his tone, 'to get everything ready in the library.' Saying these words, he vanished.

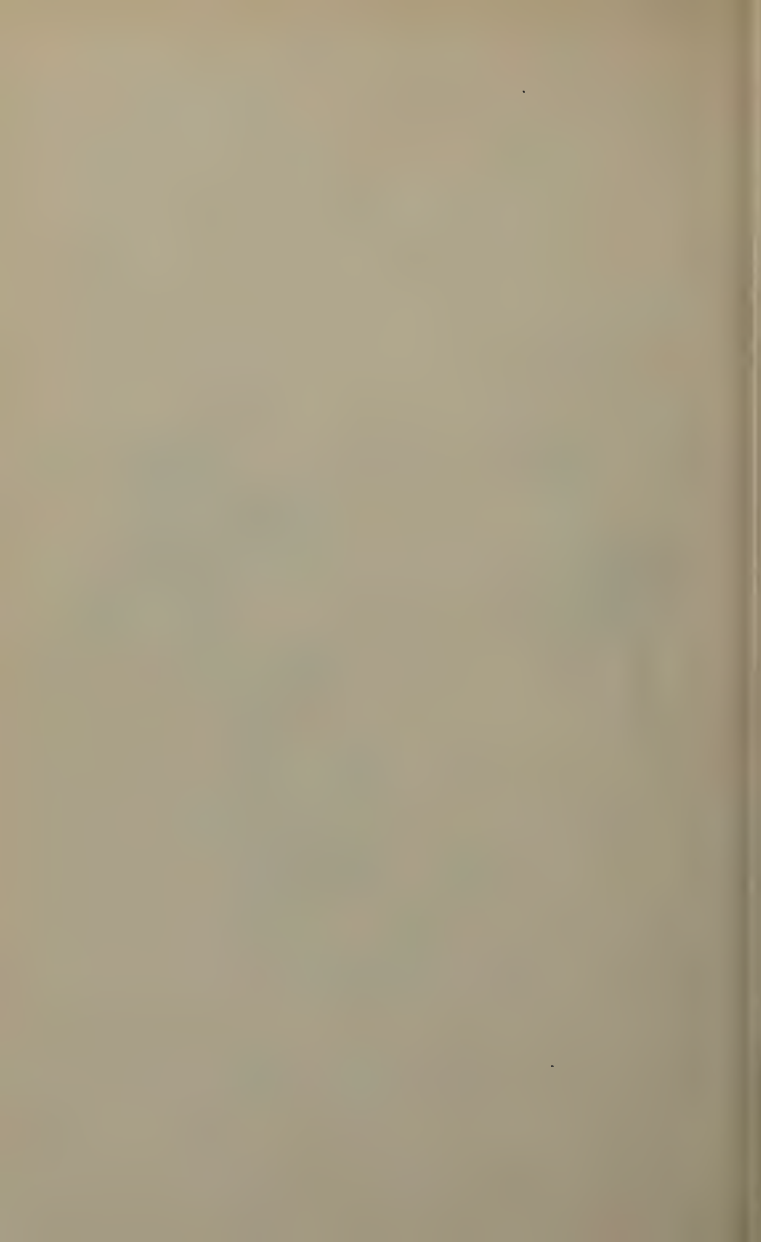
The Welsh squires now imagined they had caught a glimpse of his meaning, and set him down in their minds for a sort of gentleman conjuror, who intended to amuse them before the ball with some tricks of legerdemain. Under this impression, they became very impatient to follow him, as they had made up their minds not to be drunk before supper. The ladies, too, were extremely curious to witness an exhibition which had been announced in so singular a preamble; and the Squire, having previously insisted on every gentleman tossing off a half-pint bumper, adjourned the whole party to the library, where they were not a little surprised to discover Mr. Cranium seated, in a pensive attitude, at a large table, decorated with a copious variety of skulls.

Some of the ladies were so much shocked at this extraordinary display, that a scene of great confusion ensued. Fans were very actively exercised, and water was strenuously called for by some of the most officious of the gentlemen; on which the little butler entered with a large allowance of liquid, which bore, indeed, the name of *water*; but was in reality a very powerful spirit. This was the only species of water which the little butler had ever heard called for in Headlong Hall. The mistake was not attended with any evil effects: for the fluid was no sooner applied to the lips of the fainting fair ones, than it resuscitated them with an expedition truly miraculous.

Order was at length restored; the audience took their seats, and the craniological orator held forth in the following terms:



'Fans were very actively exercised, and water was strenuously called for by some of the most officious of the gentlemen.'



CHAPTER XII

THE LECTURE

‘PHYSIOLOGISTS have been much puzzled to account for the varieties of moral character in men, as well as for the remarkable similarity of habit and disposition in all the individual animals of every other respective species. A few brief sentences, perspicuously worded, and scientifically arranged, will enumerate all the characteristics of a lion, or a tiger, or a wolf, or a bear, or a squirrel, or a goat, or a horse, or an ass, or a rat, or a cat, or a hog, or a dog ; and whatever is physiologically predicated of any individual lion, tiger, wolf, bear, squirrel, goat, horse, ass, hog, or dog, will be found to hold true of all lions, tigers, wolves, bears, squirrels, goats, horses, asses, hogs, and dogs, whatsoever. Now, in man, the very reverse of this appears to be the case ; for he has so few distinct and characteristic marks which hold true of all his species, that philosophers in all ages have found it a task of infinite difficulty to give him a definition. Hence one has defined him to be a *featherless biped*, a definition which is equally applicable to an unfledged fowl : another to be *an animal which forms opinions*, than which nothing can be more inaccurate, for a very small number of the species form opinions, and the remainder take them upon trust, without investigation or inquiry.

‘Again, man has been defined to be *an animal that carries a stick* : an attribute which undoubtedly belongs to man only, but not to all men always ; though it uniformly characterises some of the graver and more imposing varieties, such as physicians, oran-outangs, and lords in waiting.

‘We cannot define man to be a reasoning animal, for we

do not dispute that idiots are men ; to say nothing of that very numerous description of persons who consider themselves reasoning animals, and are so denominated by the ironical courtesy of the world, who labour, nevertheless, under a very gross delusion in that essential particular.

‘It appears to me that man may be correctly defined an animal, which, without any peculiar or distinguishing faculty of its own, is, as it were, a bundle or compound of faculties of other animals, by a distinct enumeration of which any individual of the species may be satisfactorily described. This is manifest, even in the ordinary language of conversation, when, in summing up, for example, the qualities of an accomplished courtier, we say he has the vanity of a peacock, the cunning of a fox, the treachery of an hyæna, the cold-heartedness of a cat, and the servility of a jackal. That this is perfectly consensaneous to scientific truth, will appear in the further progress of these observations.

‘Every particular faculty of the mind has its corresponding organ in the brain. In proportion as any particular faculty or propensity acquires paramount activity in any individual, these organs develop themselves, and their development becomes externally obvious by corresponding lumps and bumps, exuberances and protuberances, on the osseous compages of the occiput and sinciput. In all animals but man, the same organ is equally developed in every individual of the species : for instance, that of migration in the swallow, that of destruction in the tiger, that of architecture in the beaver, and that of parental affection in the bear. The human brain, however, consists, as I have said, of a bundle or compound of all the faculties of all other animals ; and from the greater development of one or more of these, in the infinite varieties of combination, result all the peculiarities of individual character.

‘Here is the skull of a beaver, and that of Sir Christopher Wren. You observe, in both these specimens, the prodigious development of the organ of constructiveness.

‘Here is the skull of a bullfinch, and that of an eminent fiddler. You may compare the organ of music.

‘Here is the skull of a tiger. You observe the organ of carnage. Here is the skull of a fox. You observe the organ of plunder. Here is the skull of a peacock. You observe the organ of vanity. Here is the skull of an illustrious robber,

who, after a long and triumphant process of depredation and murder, was suddenly checked in his career by means of a certain quality inherent in preparations of hemp, which, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall call *suspensiveness*. Here is the skull of a conqueror, who, after over-running several kingdoms, burning a number of cities, and causing the deaths of two or three millions of men, women, and children, was entombed with all the pageantry of public lamentation, and figured as the hero of several thousand odes and a round



“Here is the skull of a beaver, and that of Sir Christopher Wren.”

dozen of epics; while the poor highwayman was twice executed—

“At the gallows first, and after in a ballad,
Sung to a villainous tune.”

You observe, in both these skulls, the combined development of the organs of carnage, plunder, and vanity, which I have separately pointed out in the tiger, the fox, and the peacock. The greater enlargement of the organ of vanity in the hero is the only criterion by which I can distinguish them from each other. Born with the same faculties, and the same propensities, these two men were formed by nature to run the same career:

the different combinations of external circumstances decided the differences of their destinies.

‘Here is the skull of a Newfoundland dog. You observe the organ of benevolence, and that of attachment. Here is a human skull, in which you may observe a very striking negation of both these organs ; and an equally striking development of those of destruction, cunning, avarice, and self-love. This was one of the most illustrious statesmen that ever flourished in the page of history.

‘Here is the skull of a turnspit, which, after a wretched life of *dirty work*, was turned out of doors to die on a dunghill. I have been induced to preserve it, in consequence of its remarkable similarity to this, which belonged to a courtly poet, who having grown grey in flattering the great, was cast off in the same manner to perish by the same catastrophe.’

After these, and several other illustrations, during which the skulls were handed round for the inspection of the company, Mr. Cranium proceeded thus :—

‘It is obvious, from what I have said, that no man can hope for worldly honour or advancement, who is not placed in such a relation to external circumstances as may be consentaneous to his peculiar cerebral organs ; and I would advise every parent, who has the welfare of his son at heart, to procure as extensive a collection as possible of the skulls of animals, and, before determining on the choice of a profession, to compare with the utmost nicety their bumps and protuberances with those of the skull of his son. If the development of the organ of destruction point out a similarity between the youth and the tiger, let him be brought up to some profession (whether that of a butcher, a soldier, or a physician, may be regulated by circumstances) in which he may be furnished with a licence to kill : as, without such licence, the indulgence of his natural propensity may lead to the untimely rescission of his vital thread, “with edge of penny cord and vile reproach.” If he show an analogy with the jackal, let all possible influence be used to procure him a place at court, where he will infallibly thrive. If his skull bear a marked resemblance to that of a magpie, it cannot be doubted that he will prove an admirable lawyer ; and if with this advantageous conformation be combined any similitude to that of an owl, very confident hopes may be formed of his becoming a judge.’

THE LECTURE

A furious flourish of music was now heard from the ball-room, the Squire having secretly despatched the little butler to order it to strike up, by way of a hint to Mr. Cranium to finish his harangue. The company took the hint and adjourned tumultuously, having understood just as much of the lecture as furnished them with amusement for the ensuing twelvemonth, in feeling the skulls of all their acquaintance.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BALL

THE ball-room was adorned with great taste and elegance, under the direction of Miss Caprioletta and her friend Miss Cephalis, who were themselves its most beautiful ornaments, even though romantic Meirion, the pre-eminent in loveliness, sent many of its loveliest daughters to grace the festive scene. Numberless were the solicitations of the dazzled swains of Cambria for the honour of the two first dances with the one or the other of these fascinating friends; but little availed, on this occasion, the pedigree lineally traced from Caractacus or King Arthur; their two philosophical lovers, neither of whom could have given the least account of his great-great-grandfather, had engaged them many days before. Mr. Panscope chafed and fretted like Llugwy in his bed of rocks, when the object of his adoration stood up with his rival: but he consoled himself with a lively damsel from the vale of Edeirnion, having first compelled Miss Cephalis to promise him her hand for the fourth set.

The ball was accordingly opened by Miss Caprioletta and Mr. Foster, which gave rise to much speculation among the Welsh gentry, as to who this Mr. Foster could be; some of the more learned among them secretly resolving to investigate most profoundly the antiquity of the name of Foster, and ascertain what right a person so denominated could have to open the most illustrious of all possible balls with the lovely Caprioletta Headlong, the only sister of Harry Headlong, Esquire, of Headlong Hall, in the Vale of Llanberris, the only surviving male representative of the antediluvian family of Headlong Ap-Rhaiader.

When the first two dances were ended, Mr. Escot, who did not choose to dance with any one but his adorable Cephaliis, looking round for a convenient seat, discovered Mr. Jenkison in a corner by the side of the Reverend Doctor Gaster, who was keeping excellent time with his nose to the lively melody of the harp and fiddle. Mr. Escot seated himself by the side of Mr. Jenkison, and inquired if he took no part in the amusement of the night.

Mr. Jenkison. No. The universal cheerfulness of the company induces me to rise; the trouble of such violent exercise induces me to sit still. Did I see a young lady in want of a partner, gallantry would incite me to offer myself as her devoted knight for half an hour: but, as I perceive there are enough without me, that motive is null. I have been weighing these points *pro* and *con*, and remain *in statu quo*.

Mr. Escot. I have danced, contrary to my system, as I have done many other things since I have been here, from a motive that you will easily guess. (*Mr. Jenkison smiled.*) I have great objections to dancing. The wild and original man is a calm and contemplative animal. The stings of natural appetite alone rouse him to action. He satisfies his hunger with roots and fruits, unvitiated by the malignant adhibition of fire, and all its diabolical processes of elixion and assation; he slakes his thirst in the mountain-stream, συμμισγεται τη επι-τυχουση, and returns to his peaceful state of meditative repose.

Mr. Jenkison. Like the metaphysical statue of Condillac.

Mr. Escot. With all its senses and purely natural faculties developed, certainly. Imagine this tranquil and passionless being, occupied in his first meditation on the simple question of *Where am I? Whence do I come? And what is the end of my existence?* Then suddenly place before him a chandelier, a fiddler, and a magnificent beau in silk stockings and pumps, bounding, skipping, swinging, capering, and throwing himself into ten thousand attitudes, till his face glows with fever, and distils with perspiration: the first impulse excited in his mind by such an apparition will be that of violent fear, which, by the reiterated perception of its harmlessness, will subside into simple astonishment. Then let any genius, sufficiently powerful to impress on his mind all the terms of the communication, impart to him, that after a long process of ages, when his race shall have attained what some people think proper to de-

nominate a very advanced stage of perfectibility, the most favoured and distinguished of the community shall meet by hundreds, to grin, and labour, and gesticulate, like the phantasma before him, from sunset to sunrise, while all nature is at rest, and that they shall consider this a happy and pleasurable mode of existence, and furnishing the most delightful of all possible contrasts to what they will call his vegetative state: would he not groan from his inmost soul for the lamentable condition of his posterity?

Mr. Jenkison. I know not what your wild and original man might think of the matter in the abstract; but comparatively, I conceive, he would be better pleased with the vision of such a scene as this, than with that of a party of Indians (who would have all the advantage of being nearly as wild as himself), dancing their infernal war-dance round a midnight fire in a North American forest.

Mr. Escot. Not if you should impart to him the true nature of both, by laying open to his view the springs of action in both parties.

Mr. Jenkison. To do this with effect, you must make him a profound metaphysician, and thus transfer him at once from his wild and original state to a very advanced stage of intellectual progression; whether that progression be towards good or evil, I leave you and our friend Foster to settle between you.

Mr. Escot. I wish to make no change in his habits and feelings, but to give him, hypothetically, so much mental illumination as will enable him to take a clear view of two distinct stages of the deterioration of his posterity, that he may be enabled to compare them with each other, and with his own more happy condition. The Indian, dancing round the midnight fire, is very far deteriorated; but the magnificent beau, dancing to the light of chandeliers, is infinitely more so. The Indian is a hunter: he makes great use of fire, and subsists almost entirely on animal food. The malevolent passions that spring from these pernicious habits involve him in perpetual war. He is, therefore, necessitated, for his own preservation, to keep all the energies of his nature in constant activity: to this end his midnight war-dance is very powerfully subservient, and, though in itself a frightful spectacle, is at least justifiable on the iron plea of necessity.

THE BALL

Mr. Jenkison. On the same iron plea, the modern system of dancing is more justifiable. The Indian dances to prepare himself for killing his enemy: but while the beaux and belles of our assemblies dance, they are in the very act of killing theirs—TIME!—a more inveterate and formidable foe than any the Indian has to contend with; for, however completely and ingeniously killed, he is sure to rise again, ‘with twenty mortal murders on his crown,’ leading his army of blue devils, with ennui in the van and vapours in the rear.

Mr. Escot. Your observation militates on my side of the question; and it is a strong argument in favour of the Indian, that he has no such enemy to kill.

Mr. Jenkison. There is certainly a great deal to be said against dancing: there is also a great deal to be said in its favour. The first side of the question I leave for the present to you: on the latter, I may venture to allege that no amusement seems more natural and more congenial to youth than this. It has the advantage of bringing young persons of both sexes together, in a manner which its publicity renders perfectly unexceptionable, enabling them to see and know each other better than, perhaps, any other mode of general association. *Tête-à-têtes* are dangerous things. Small family parties are too much under mutual observation. A ball-room appears to me almost the only scene uniting that degree of rational and innocent liberty of intercourse, which it is desirable to promote as much as possible between young persons, with that scrupulous attention to the delicacy and propriety of female conduct, which I consider the fundamental basis of all our most valuable social relations.

Mr. Escot. There would be some plausibility in your argument, if it were not the very essence of this species of intercourse to exhibit them to each other under false colours. Here all is show, and varnish, and hypocrisy, and coquetry; they dress up their moral character for the evening at the same toilet where they manufacture their shapes and faces. Ill-temper lies buried under a studied accumulation of smiles. Envy, hatred, and malice, retreat from the countenance, to entrench themselves more deeply in the heart. Treachery lurks under the flowers of courtesy. Ignorance and folly take refuge in that unmeaning gabble which it would be profanation to call language, and which even those whom long experience

in 'the dreary intercourse of daily life' has screwed up to such a pitch of stoical endurance that they can listen to it by the hour, have branded with the ignominious appellation of '*small talk*.' Small indeed!—the absolute minimum of the infinitely little.

Mr. Jenkison. Go on. I have said all I intended to say on the favourable side. I shall have great pleasure in hearing you balance the argument.

Mr. Escot. I expect you to confess that I shall have more than balanced it. A ball-room is an epitome of all that is most worthless and unamiable in the great sphere of human life. Every petty and malignant passion is called into play. Coquetry is perpetually on the alert to captivate, caprice to mortify, and vanity to take offence. One amiable female is rendered miserable for the evening by seeing another, whom she intended to outshine, in a more attractive dress than her own; while the other omits no method of giving stings to her triumph, which she enjoys with all the secret arrogance of an oriental sultana. Another is compelled to dance with a *monster* she abhors. A third has set her heart on dancing with a particular partner, perhaps for the amiable motive of annoying one of her *dear friends*: not only he does not ask her, but she sees him dancing with that identical *dear friend*, whom from that moment she hates more cordially than ever. Perhaps, what is worse than all, she has set her heart on refusing some impertinent fop, who does not give her the opportunity. As to the men, the case is very nearly the same with them. To be sure, they have the privilege of making the first advances, and are, therefore, less liable to have an odious partner forced upon them; though this sometimes happens, as I know by woful experience: but it is seldom they can procure the very partner they prefer; and when they do, the absurd necessity of changing every two dances forces them away, and leaves them only the miserable alternative of taking up with something disagreeable perhaps in itself, and at all events rendered so by contrast, or of retreating into some solitary corner, to vent their spleen on the first idle coxcomb they can find.

Mr. Jenkison. I hope that is not the motive which brings you to me.

Mr. Escot. Clearly not. But the most afflicting consideration of all is, that these malignant and miserable feelings

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are masked under that uniform disguise of pretended benevolence, *that fine and delicate irony, called politeness, which gives so much ease and pliability to the mutual intercourse of civilised man and enables him to assume the appearance of every virtue without the reality of one.*¹

The second set of dances was now terminated, and Mr. Escot flew off to reclaim the hand of the beautiful Cephalis, with whom he figured away with surprising alacrity, and probably felt at least as happy among the chandeliers and silk stockings, at which he had just been railing, as he would have been in an American forest, making one in an Indian ring, by the light of a blazing fire, even though his hand had been locked in that of the most beautiful *squaw* that ever listened to the roar of Niagara.

Squire Headlong was now beset by his maiden aunt, Miss Brindle-mew Grimalkin Phœbe Tabitha Ap-Headlong, on one side, and Sir Patrick O'Prism on the other; the former insisting that he should immediately procure her a partner; the latter earnestly requesting the same interference in behalf of Miss Philomela Poppyseed. The Squire thought to emancipate himself from his two petitioners by making them dance with each other; but Sir Patrick vehemently pleading a prior engagement, the Squire threw his eyes around till they alighted on Mr. Jenkison and the Reverend Doctor Gaster; both of whom, after waking the latter, he pressed into the service. The doctor, arising with a strange kind of guttural sound, which was half a yawn and half a groan, was handed by the officious Squire to Miss Philomela, who received him with sullen dignity: she had not yet forgotten his falling asleep during the first chapter of her novel, while she was condescending to detail to him the outlines of four superlative volumes. The doctor, on his part, had most completely forgotten it; and though he thought there was something in her physiognomy rather more forbidding than usual, he gave himself no concern about the cause, and had not the least suspicion that it was at all connected with himself. Miss Brindle-mew was very well contented with Mr. Jenkison, and gave him two or three ogles, accompanied by a most risible distortion of the countenance which she intended for a captivating smile. As to Mr. Jenkison, it was all one to

¹ Rousseau, *Discours sur les Sciences*.

him with whom he danced, or whether he danced or not : he was therefore just as well pleased as if he had been left alone in his corner ; which is probably more than could have been said of any other human being under similar circumstances.

At the end of the third set, supper was announced ; and the party, pairing off like turtles, adjourned to the supper-room. The Squire was now the happiest of mortal men, and the little butler the most laborious. The centre of the largest table was decorated with a model of Snowdon, surmounted with an enormous artificial leek, the leaves of angelica, and the bulb of blanc-mange. A little way from the summit was a tarn, or mountain-pool, supplied through concealed tubes with an inexhaustible flow of milk-punch, which, dashing in cascades down the miniature rocks, fell into the more capacious lake below, washing the mimic foundations of Headlong Hall. The reverend doctor handed Miss Philomela to the chair most conveniently situated for enjoying this interesting scene, protesting he had never before been sufficiently impressed with the magnificence of that mountain, which he now perceived to be well worthy of all the fame it had obtained.

‘ Now, when they had eaten and were satisfied,’ Squire Headlong called on Mr. Chromatic for a song ; who, with the assistance of his two accomplished daughters, regaled the ears of the company with the following

TERZETTO¹

Grey Twilight, from her shadowy hill,
Discolours Nature’s vernal bloom,
And sheds on grove, and field, and rill,
One placid tint of deepening gloom.

The sailor sighs ’mid shoreless seas,
Touched by the thought of friends afar,
As, fanned by ocean’s flowing breeze,
He gazes on the western star.

The wanderer hears, in pensive dream,
The accents of the last farewell,
As, pausing by the mountain stream,
He listens to the evening bell.

This terzetto was of course much applauded ; Mr. Mile-

¹ Imitated from a passage in the Purgatorio of Dante.

stone observing, that he thought the figure in the last verse would have been more picturesque, if it had been represented with its arms folded and its back against a tree ; or leaning on its staff, with a cockle-shell in its hat, like a pilgrim of ancient times.

Mr. Chromatic professed himself astonished that a gentleman of genuine modern taste, like Mr. Milestone, should consider the words of a song of any consequence whatever, seeing that they were at the best only a species of pegs, for the more convenient suspension of crotchets and quavers. This remark drew on him a very severe reprimand from Mr. Mac Laurel, who said to him, ‘ Dinna ye ken, sir, that soond is a thing utterly worthless in itsel’, and only effectual in agreeable excitements, as far as it is an aicho to sense ? Is there ony soond mair meeserable an’ peetifu’ than the scrape o’ a feddle, when it does na touch ony chord i’ the human sensorium ? Is there ony mair divine than the deep note o’ a bagpipe, when it breathes the auncient meelodies o’ leeberty an’ love ? It is true, there are peculiar trains o’ feeling an’ sentiment, which parteecular combinations o’ meelody are calculated to excite ; an’ sae far music can produce its effect without words : but it does na follow, that, when ye put words to it, it becomes a matter of indifference what they are ; for a gude strain of impassioned poetry will greatly increase the effect, and a tessue o’ nonsensical doggrel will destroy it a’thegither. Noo, as gude poetry can produce its effect without music, sae will gude music without poetry ; and as gude music will be mair pooerfu’ by itsel’ than wi’ bad poetry, sae will gude poetry than wi’ bad music : but, when ye put gude music an’ gude poetry thegither, ye produce the divinest compound o’ sentimental harmony that can possibly find its way through the lug to the saul.’

Mr. Chromatic admitted that there was much justice in these observations, but still maintained the subserviency of poetry to music. Mr. Mac Laurel as strenuously maintained the contrary ; and a furious war of words was proceeding to perilous lengths, when the Squire interposed his authority towards the reproduction of peace, which was forthwith concluded, and all animosities drowned in a libation of milk-punch, the Reverend Doctor Gaster officiating as high priest on the occasion.

HEADLONG HALL

Mr. Chromatic now requested Miss Caprioletta to favour the company with an air. The young lady immediately complied, and sang the following simple

BALLAD

- ‘Q Mary, my sister, thy sorrow give o’er,
I soon shall return, girl, and leave thee no more :
But with children so fair, and a husband so kind,
I shall feel less regret when I leave thee behind.
- ‘I have made thee a bench for the door of thy cot.
And more would I give thee, but more I have not :
Sit and think of me there, in the warm summer day,
And give me three kisses, my labour to pay.’
- She gave him three kisses, and forth did he fare.
And long did he wander, and no one knew where ;
And long from her cottage, through sunshine and rain,
She watched his return, but he came not again.
- Her children grew up, and her husband grew grey ;
She sate on the bench through the long summer day :
One evening, when twilight was deep on the shore,
There came an old soldier, and stood by the door.
- In English he spoke, and none knew what he said,
But her oatcake and milk on the table she spread ;
Then he sate to his supper, and blithely he sung,
And she knew the dear sounds of her own native tongue :
- ‘O rich are the feats in the Englishman’s hall,
And the wine sparkles bright in the goblets of Gaul :
But their mingled attractions I well could withstand,
For the milk and the oatcake of Meirion’s dear land.’
- ‘And art thou a Welchman, old soldier?’ she cried.
‘Many years have I wandered,’ the stranger replied :
‘Twixt Danube and Thames many rivers there be,
But the bright waves of Cynfael are fairest to me.
- ‘I felled the grey oak, ere I hastened to roam,
And I fashioned a bench for the door of my home ;
And well my dear sister my labour repaid,
Who gave me three kisses when first it was made.
- ‘In the old English soldier thy brother appears :
Here is gold in abundance, the saving of years :
Give me oatcake and milk in return for my store,
And a seat by thy side on the bench at the door.’

THE BALL

Various other songs succeeded, which, as we are not composing a song book, we shall lay aside for the present.

An old squire, who had not missed one of these anniversaries, during more than half a century, now stood up, and filling a half-pint bumper, pronounced, with a stentorian voice—‘To the immortal memory of Headlong Ap-Rhaiader, and to the health of his noble descendant and worthy representative!’ This example was followed by all the gentlemen present. The harp struck up a triumphal strain; and, the old squire already mentioned, vociferating the first stave, they sang, or rather roared, the following

CHORUS

Hail to the Headlong ! the Headlong Ap-Headlong !
All hail to the Headlong, the Headlong Ap-Headlong !
The Headlong Ap-Headlong
Ap-Breakneck Ap-Headlong
Ap-Cataract Ap-Pistyll Ap-Rhaiader Ap-Headlong !

The bright bowl we steep in the name of the Headlong :
Let the youths pledge it deep to the Headlong Ap-Headlong,
And the rosy-lipped lasses
Touch the brim as it passes,
And kiss the red tide for the Headlong Ap-Headlong !

The loud harp resounds in the hall of the Headlong :
The light step rebounds in the hall of the Headlong :
Where shall music invite us,
Or beauty delight us,
If not in the hall of the Headlong Ap-Headlong ?

Huzza ! to the health of the Headlong Ap-Headlong !
Fill the bowl, fill in floods, to the health of the Headlong !
Till the stream ruby-glowing,
On all sides o’erflowing,
Shall fall in cascades to the health of the Headlong !
The Headlong Ap-Headlong
Ap-Breakneck Ap-Headlong
Ap-Cataract Ap-Pistyll Ap-Rhaiader Ap-Headlong !

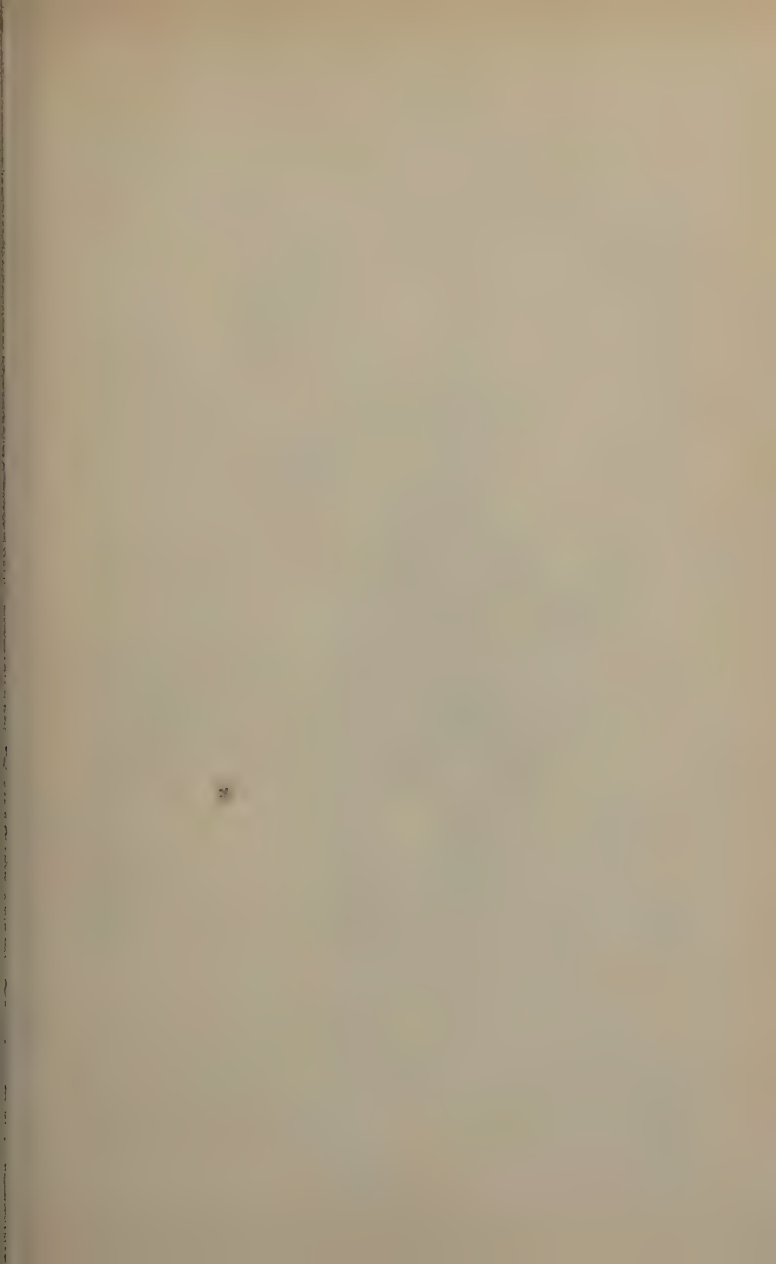
Squire Headlong returned thanks with an appropriate libation, and the company re-adjourned to the ball-room, where they kept it up till sunrise, when the little butler summoned them to breakfast.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROPOSALS

THE chorus which celebrated the antiquity of her lineage had been ringing all night in the ears of Miss Brindle-mew Grimal-kin Phœbe Tabitha Ap-Headlong, when, taking the Squire aside, while the visitors were sipping their tea and coffee, 'Nephew Harry,' said she, 'I have been noting your behaviour, during the several stages of the ball and supper; and, though I cannot tax you with any want of gallantry, for you are a very gallant young man, Nephew Harry, very gallant—I wish I could say as much for every one' (added she, throwing a spiteful look towards a distant corner, where Mr. Jenkinson was sitting with great *nonchalance*, and at the moment dipping a rusk in a cup of chocolate); 'but I lament to perceive that you were at least as pleased with your lakes of milk-punch, and your bottles of Champagne and Burgundy, as with any of your delightful partners. Now, though I can readily excuse this degree of incombustibility in the descendant of a family so remarkable in all ages for personal beauty as ours, yet I lament it exceedingly, when I consider that, in conjunction with your present predilection for the easy life of a bachelor, it may possibly prove the means of causing our ancient genealogical tree, which has its roots, if I may so speak, in the foundations of the world, to terminate suddenly in a point: unless you feel yourself moved by my exhortations to follow the example of all your ancestors, by choosing yourself a fitting and suitable helpmate to immortalise the pedigree of Headlong Ap-Rhaiader.'

'Egad!' said Squire Headlong, 'that is very true, I'll marry directly. A good opportunity to fix on some one, now





'The Squire, exclaiming "Music has charms!" flew over to Mr. Chromatic, and, with a hearty slap on the shoulder, asked him "how he should like him for a son-in-law,"'

THE PROPOSALS

they are all here ; and I'll pop the question without further ceremony.'

'What think you,' said the old lady, 'of Miss Nanny Glendu, the lineal descendant of Llewelyn Ap-Yorwerth.'

'She won't do,' said Squire Headlong.

'What say you, then,' said the lady, 'to Miss Williams, of Pontyglasrhydyrallt, the descendant of the ancient family of——?'

'I don't like her,' said Squire Headlong ; 'and as to her ancient family, that is a matter of no consequence. I have antiquity enough for two. They are all moderns, people of yesterday, in comparison with us. What signify six or seven centuries, which are the most they can make up?'

'Why, to be sure,' said the aunt, 'on that view of the question, it is no consequence. What think you, then, of Miss Owen, of Nidd-y-Gygfraen? She will have six thousand a year.'

'I would not have her,' said Squire Headlong, 'if she had fifty. I'll think of somebody presently. I should like to be married on the same day with Caprioletta.'

'Caprioletta!' said Miss Brindle-mew ; 'without my being consulted!'

'Consulted!' said the Squire : 'I was commissioned to tell you, but somehow or other I let it slip. However, she is going to be married to my friend Mr. Foster, the philosopher.'

'Oh!' said the maiden aunt, 'that a daughter of our ancient family should marry a philosopher! It is enough to make the bones of all the Ap-Rhaiaders turn in their graves!'

'I happen to be more enlightened,' said Squire Headlong, 'than any of my ancestors were. Besides, it is Caprioletta's affair, not mine. I tell you, the matter is settled, fixed, determined ; and so am I, to be married on the same day. I don't know, now I think of it, whom I can choose better than one of the daughters of my friend Chromatic.'

'A Saxon!' said the aunt, turning up her nose, and was commencing a vehement remonstrance ; but the Squire, exclaiming 'Music has charms!' flew over to Mr. Chromatic, and, with a hearty slap on the shoulder, asked him 'how he should like him for a son-in-law.' Mr. Chromatic, rubbing his shoulder, and highly delighted with the proposal, answered, 'Very much indeed': but, proceeding to ascertain which of

his daughters had captivated the Squire, the Squire demurred, and was unable to satisfy his curiosity. 'I hope,' said Mr. Chromatic, 'it may be Tenorina; for I imagine Graziosa has conceived a *penchant* for Sir Patrick O'Prism.'—'Tenorina, exactly,' said Squire Headlong;¹ and became so impatient to bring the matter to a conclusion, that Mr. Chromatic undertook to communicate with his daughter immediately. The young lady proved to be as ready as the Squire, and the preliminaries were arranged in little more than five minutes.

Mr. Chromatic's words, that he imagined his daughter Graziosa had conceived a *penchant* for Sir Patrick O'Prism, were not lost on the Squire, who at once determined to have as many companions in the scrape as possible, and who, as soon as he could tear himself from Mrs. Headlong elect, took three flying bounds across the room to the baronet, and said, 'So, Sir Patrick, I find you and I are going to be married?'

'Are we?' said Sir Patrick: 'then sure won't I wish you joy, and myself too? for this is the first I have heard of it.'

'Well,' said Squire Headlong, 'I have made up my mind to it, and you must not disappoint me.'

'To be sure I won't, if I can help it,' said Sir Patrick; 'and I am very much obliged to you for taking so much trouble off my hands. And pray, now, who is it that I am to be metamorphosing into Lady O'Prism?'

'Miss Graziosa Chromatic,' said the Squire.

'Och violet and vermillion!' said Sir Patrick; 'though I never thought of it before, I daresay she will suit me as well as another: but then you must persuade the ould Orpheus to draw out a few *notes* of rather a more magical description than those he is so fond of scraping on his crazy violin.'

'To be sure he shall,' said the Squire; and, immediately returning to Mr. Chromatic, concluded the negotiation for Sir Patrick as expeditiously as he had done for himself.

The Squire next addressed himself to Mr. Escot: 'Here are three couple of us going to throw off together, with the Reverend Doctor Gaster for whipper-in: now, I think you cannot do better than make the fourth with Miss Cephalis;

¹ Neither Squire Headlong nor the author seems to have adverted to one advantageous result of the former's espousal of Miss Tenorina, that the young lady's good taste (*vide supra*) would preserve the Headlong domain from the devastations of Mr. Milestone.

THE PROPOSALS

and then, as my father-in-law that is to be would say, we shall compose a very harmonious octave.'

'Indeed,' said Mr. Escot, 'nothing would be more agreeable to both of us than such an arrangement: but the old gentleman, since I first knew him, has changed, like the rest of the world, very lamentably for the worse: now, we wish to bring him to reason, if possible, though we mean to dispense with his consent if he should prove much longer refractory.'

'I'll settle him,' said Squire Headlong; and immediately posted up to Mr. Cranium, informing him that four marriages were about to take place by way of a merry winding-up of the Christmas festivities.

'Indeed!' said Mr. Cranium; 'and who are the parties?'

'In the first place,' said the Squire, 'my sister and Mr. Foster: in the second, Miss Graziosa Chromatic and Sir Patrick O'Prism: in the third, Miss Tenorina Chromatic and your humble servant: and in the fourth, to which, by the bye, your consent is wanted——'

'Oho!' said Mr. Cranium.

'Your daughter,' said Squire Headlong.

'And Mr. Panscope?' said Mr. Cranium.

'And Mr. Escot,' said Squire Headlong. 'What would you have better? He has ten thousand virtues.'

'So has Mr. Panscope,' said Mr. Cranium, 'he has ten thousand a year.'

'Virtues?' said Squire Headlong.

'Pounds,' said Mr. Cranium.

'I have set my mind on Mr. Escot,' said the Squire.

'I am much obliged to you,' said Mr. Cranium, 'for dethroning me from my paternal authority.'

'Who fished you out of the water?' said Squire Headlong.

'What is that to the purpose?' said Mr. Cranium. 'The whole process of the action was mechanical and necessary. The application of the poker necessitated the ignition of the powder: the ignition necessitated the explosion: the explosion necessitated my sudden fright, which necessitated my sudden jump, which, from a necessity equally powerful, was in a curvilinear ascent: the descent being in a corresponding curve, and commencing at a point perpendicular to the extreme line of the edge of the tower, I was, by the necessity of gravitation, attracted, first, through the ivy, and secondly through

the hazel, and thirdly through the ash, into the water beneath. The motive or impulse thus adhibited in the person of a drowning man was as powerful on his material compages as the force of gravitation on mine ; and he could no more help jumping into the water than I could help falling into it.'

'All perfectly true,' said Squire Headlong ; 'and, on the same principle, you make no distinction between the man who knocks you down and him who picks you up.'

'I make this distinction,' said Mr. Cranium, 'that I avoid the former as a machine containing a peculiar *cataballitive* quality, which I have found to be not consentaneous to my mode of pleasurable existence ; but I attach no moral merit or demerit to either of them, as these terms are usually employed, seeing that they are equally creatures of necessity, and must act as they do from the nature of their organisation. I no more blame or praise a man for what is called vice or virtue, than I tax a tuft of hemlock with malevolence, or discover great philanthropy in a field of potatoes, seeing that the men and the plants are equally incapacitated, by their original internal organisation, and the combinations and modifications of external circumstances, from being anything but what they are. *Quod victus fateare necesse est.*'

'Yet you destroy the hemlock,' said Squire Headlong, 'and cultivate the potato ; that is my way, at least.'

'I do,' said Mr. Cranium ; 'because I know that the farinaceous qualities of the potato will tend to preserve the great requisites of unity and coalescence in the various constituent portions of my animal republic ; and that the hemlock, if gathered by mistake for parsley, chopped up small with butter, and eaten with a boiled chicken, would necessitate a great derangement, and perhaps a total decomposition, of my corporeal mechanism.'

'Very well,' said the Squire ; 'then you are necessitated to like Mr. Escot better than Mr. Panscope ?'

'That is a *non sequitur*,' said Mr. Cranium.

'Then this is a *sequitur*,' said the Squire : 'your daughter and Mr. Escot are necessitated to love one another ; and, unless you feel necessitated to adhibit your consent, they will feel necessitated to dispense with it ; since it does appear to moral and political economists to be essentially inherent in the eternal fitness of things.'

THE PROPOSALS

Mr. Cranium fell into a profound reverie : emerging from which, he said, looking Squire Headlong full in the face, 'Do you think Mr. Escot would give me that skull?'

'Skull !' said Squire Headlong.

'Yes,' said Mr. Cranium, 'the skull of Cadwallader.'

'To be sure he will,' said the Squire.

'Ascertain the point,' said Mr. Cranium.

'How can you doubt it?' said the Squire.

'I simply know,' said Mr. Cranium, 'that if it were once in my possession, I would not part with it for any acquisition on earth, much less for a wife. I have had one : and, as marriage has been compared to a pill, I can very safely assert that *one is a dose*; and my reason for thinking that he will not part with it is, that its extraordinary magnitude tends to support his system, as much as its very marked protuberances tend to support mine ; and you know his own system is of all things the dearest to every man of liberal thinking and a philosophical tendency.'

The Squire flew over to Mr. Escot. 'I told you,' said he, 'I would settle him : but there is a very hard condition attached to his compliance.'

'I submit to it,' said Mr. Escot, 'be it what it may.'

'Nothing less,' said Squire Headlong, 'than the absolute and unconditional surrender of the skull of Cadwallader.'

'I resign it,' said Mr. Escot.

'The skull is yours,' said the Squire, skipping over to Mr. Cranium.

'I am perfectly satisfied,' said Mr. Cranium.

'The lady is yours,' said the Squire, skipping back to Mr. Escot.

'I am the happiest man alive,' said Mr. Escot.

'Come,' said the Squire, 'then there is an amelioration in the state of the sensitive man.'

'A slight oscillation of good in the instance of a solitary individual,' answered Mr. Escot, 'by no means affects the solidity of my opinions concerning the general deterioration of the civilised world ; which when I can be induced to contemplate with feelings of satisfaction, I doubt not but that I may be persuaded *to be in love with tortures, and to think charitably of the rack.*'¹

¹ Jeremy Taylor.

Saying these words, he flew off as nimbly as Squire Headlong himself, to impart the happy intelligence to his beautiful Cephalis.

Mr. Cranium now walked up to Mr. Panscope, to condole with him on the disappointment of their mutual hopes. Mr. Panscope begged him not to distress himself on the subject, observing that the monotonous system of female education brought every individual of the sex to so remarkable an approximation of similarity, that no wise man would suffer himself to be annoyed by a loss so easily repaired; and that there was much truth, though not much elegance, in a remark which he had heard made on a similar occasion by a post-captain of his acquaintance, 'that there never was a fish taken out of the sea, but left another as good behind.'

Mr. Cranium replied that no two individuals having all the organs of the skull similarly developed, the universal resemblance of which Mr. Panscope had spoken could not possibly exist. Mr. Panscope rejoined; and a long discussion ensued, concerning the comparative influence of natural organisation and artificial education, in which the beautiful Cephalis was totally lost sight of, and which ended, as most controversies do, by each party continuing firm in his own opinion, and professing his profound astonishment at the blindness and prejudices of the other.

In the meanwhile, a great confusion had arisen at the outer doors, the departure of the ball-visitors being impeded by a circumstance which the experience of ages had discovered no means to obviate. The grooms, coachmen, and postilions were all drunk. It was proposed that the gentlemen should officiate in their places: but the gentlemen were almost all in the same condition. This was a fearful dilemma: but a very diligent investigation brought to light a few servants and a few gentlemen not above *half-seas-over*; and by an equitable distribution of these rarities, the greater part of the guests were enabled to set forward, with very nearly an even chance of not having their necks broken before they reached home.



'A very diligent investigation brought to light a few servants and a few gentlemen not above half-seas-over.'

CHAPTER XV

THE CONCLUSION

THE Squire and his select party of philosophers and dilettanti were again left in peaceful possession of Headlong Hall : and, as the former made a point of never losing a moment in the accomplishment of a favourite object, he did not suffer many days to elapse, before the spiritual metamorphosis of eight into four was effected by the clerical dexterity of the Reverend Doctor Gaster.

Immediately after the ceremony, the whole party dispersed, the Squire having first extracted from every one of his chosen guests a positive promise to re-assemble in August, when they would be better enabled, in its most appropriate season, to form a correct judgment of Cambrian hospitality.

Mr. Jenkison shook hands at parting with his two brother philosophers. ‘According to your respective systems,’ said he, ‘I ought to congratulate *you* on a change for the better, which I do most cordially : and to condole with *you* on a change for the worse, though, when I consider whom you have chosen, I should violate every principle of probability in doing so.’

‘You will do well,’ said Mr. Foster, ‘to follow our example. The extensive circle of general philanthropy, which, in the present advanced stage of human nature, comprehends in its circumference the destinies of the whole species, originated, and still proceeds, from that narrower circle of domestic affection, which first set limits to the empire of selfishness, and, by purifying the passions and enlarging the affections of mankind, has given to the views of benevolence an increasing and illimitable expansion, which will finally diffuse happiness and peace over the whole surface of the world.’

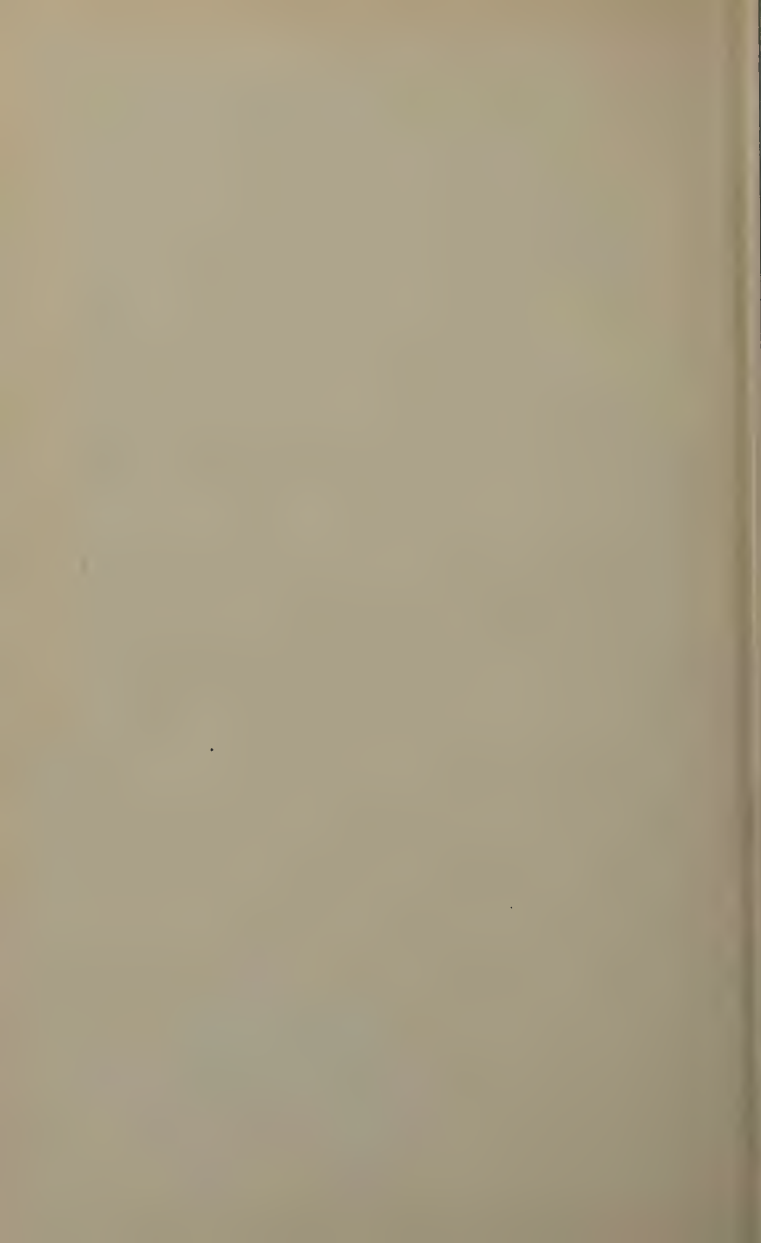
‘The affection,’ said Mr. Escot, ‘of two congenial spirits, united not by legal bondage and superstitious imposture, but by mutual confidence and reciprocal virtues, is the only counterbalancing consolation in this scene of mischief and misery. But how rarely is this the case according to the present system of marriage ! So far from being a central point of expansion to the great circle of universal benevolence, it serves only to concentrate the feelings of natural sympathy in the reflected selfishness of family interest, and to substitute for the *humani nihil alienum puto* of youthful philanthropy the *charity begins at home* of maturer years. And what accession of individual happiness is acquired by this oblivion of the general good ? Luxury, despotism, and avarice have so seized and entangled nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the human race, that the matrimonial compact, which ought to be the most easy, the most free, and the most simple of all engagements, is become the most slavish and complicated,—a mere question of finance,—a system of bargain, and barter, and commerce, and trick, and chicanery, and dissimulation, and fraud. Is there one instance in ten thousand, in which the buds of first affection are not most cruelly and hopelessly blasted, by avarice, or ambition, or arbitrary power ? Females, condemned during the whole flower of their youth to a worse than monastic celibacy, irrevocably debarred from the hope to which their first affections pointed, will, at a certain period of life, as the natural delicacy of taste and feeling is gradually worn away by the attrition of society, become willing to take up with any coxcomb or scoundrel, whom that merciless and mercenary gang of cold-blooded slaves and assassins, called, in the ordinary prostitution of language, *friends*, may agree in designating as a *prudent choice*. Young men, on the other hand, are driven by the same vile superstitions from the company of the most amiable and modest of the opposite sex, to that of those miserable victims and outcasts of a world which dares to call itself virtuous, whom that very society whose pernicious institutions first caused their aberrations,—consigning them, without one tear of pity or one struggle of remorse, to penury, infamy, and disease,—condemns to bear the burden of its own atrocious absurdities ! Thus, the youth of one sex is consumed in slavery, disappointment, and spleen ; that of the other, in frantic folly and selfish intemperance : till at

THE CONCLUSION

length, on the necks of a couple so enfeebled, so perverted, so distempered both in body and soul, society throws the yoke of marriage: that yoke, which, once riveted on the necks of its victims, clings to them like the poisoned garments of Nessus or Medea. What can be expected from these ill-assorted yoke-fellows, but that, like two ill-tempered hounds, coupled by a tyrannical sportsman, they should drag on their indissoluble fetter, snarling and growling, and pulling in different directions? What can be expected for their wretched offspring, but sickness and suffering, premature decrepitude, and untimely death? In this, as in every other institution of civilised society, avarice, luxury, and disease constitute the TRIANGULAR HARMONY of the life of man. Avarice conducts him to the abyss of toil and crime: luxury seizes on his ill-gotten spoil; and, while he revels in her enchantments, or groans beneath her tyranny, disease bursts upon him, and sweeps him from the earth.'

'Your theory,' said Mr. Jenkison, 'forms an admirable counterpoise to your example. As far as I am attracted by the one, I am repelled by the other. Thus, the scales of my philosophical balance remain eternally equiponderant, and I see no reason to say of either of them, ΟΙΧΕΤΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΑΪΔΑΟ.'¹

¹ *It descends to the shades: or, in other words, it goes to the devil.*



NIGHTMARE ABBEY

There's a dark lantern of the spirit,
Which none see by but those who bear it,
That makes them in the dark see visions
And hag themselves with apparitions,
Find racks for their own minds, and vaunt
Of their own misery and want.

BUTLER.

Matthew. Oh ! it's your only fine humour, sir. Your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir. I am melancholy myself, divers times, sir ; and then do I no more but take pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

Stephen. Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.

Matthew. Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study : it's at your service.

Stephen. I thank you, sir, I shall be bold, I warrant you. Have you a stool there, to be melancholy upon ?

BEN JONSON, *Every Man in his Humour*, Act 3, Sc. 1.

Ay esleu gazouiller et siffler oye, comme dit le commun proverbe, entre les cygnes, plutoust que d'estre entre tant de gentils poëtes et faconds orateurs mut du tout estimé.—RABELAIS, *Prol.* L. 5.

CHAPTER I

NIGHTMARE ABBEY, a venerable family mansion, in a highly picturesque state of semi-dilapidation, pleasantly situated on a strip of dry land between the sea and the fens, at the verge of the county of Lincoln, had the honour to be the seat of Christopher Glowry, Esquire. This gentleman was naturally of an atrabilarious temperament, and much troubled with those phantoms of indigestion which are commonly called *blue devils*. He had been deceived in an early friendship: he had been crossed in love; and had offered his hand, from pique, to a lady, who accepted it from interest, and who, in so doing, violently tore asunder the bonds of a tried and youthful attachment. Her vanity was gratified by being the mistress of a very extensive, if not very lively, establishment; but all the springs of her sympathies were frozen. Riches she possessed, but that which enriches them, the participation of affection, was wanting. All that they could purchase for her became indifferent to her, because that which they could not purchase, and which was more valuable than themselves, she had, for their sake, thrown away. She discovered, when it was too late, that she had mistaken the means for the end—that riches, rightly used, are instruments of happiness, but are not in themselves happiness. In this wilful blight of her affections, she found them valueless as means: they had been the end to which she had immolated all her affections, and were now the only end that remained to her. She did not confess this to herself as a principle of action, but it operated through the medium of unconscious self-deception, and terminated in inveterate avarice. She laid on external things the blame of her mind's internal disorder, and thus became by degrees an accomplished scold. She often went her daily rounds through

NIGHTMARE ABBEY

a series of deserted apartments, every creature in the house vanishing at the creak of her shoe, much more at the sound of her voice, to which the nature of things affords no simile ; for, as far as the voice of woman, when attuned by gentleness and love, transcends all other sounds in harmony, so far does it surpass all others in discord, when stretched into unnatural shrillness by anger and impatience.

Mr. Glowry used to say that his house was no better than a spacious kennel, for every one in it led the life of a dog. Disappointed both in love and in friendship, and looking upon human learning as vanity, he had come to a conclusion that there was but one good thing in the world, *videlicet*, a good dinner ; and this his parsimonious lady seldom suffered him to enjoy : but, one morning, like Sir Leoline in *Christabel*, 'he woke and found his lady dead,' and remained a very consolate widower, with one small child.

This only son and heir Mr. Glowry had christened Scythrop, from the name of a maternal ancestor, who had hanged himself one rainy day in a fit of *tedium vitæ*, and had been eulogised by a coroner's jury in the comprehensive phrase of *felo de se* ; on which account, Mr. Glowry held his memory in high honour, and made a punchbowl of his skull.

When Scythrop grew up, he was sent, as usual, to a public school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him ; and he was sent home like a well-threshed ear of corn, with nothing in his head : having finished his education to the high satisfaction of the master and fellows of his college, who had, in testimony of their approbation, presented him with a silver fish-slice, on which his name figured at the head of a laudatory inscription in some semi-barbarous dialect of Anglo-Saxonised Latin.

His fellow-students, however, who drove tandem and random in great perfection, and were connoisseurs in good inns, had taught him to drink deep ere he departed. He had passed much of his time with these choice spirits, and had seen the rays of the midnight lamp tremble on many a lengthening file of empty bottles. He passed his vacations sometimes at Nightmare Abbey, sometimes in London, at the house of his uncle, Mr. Hilary, a very cheerful and elastic gentleman, who had married the sister of the melancholy Mr. Glowry. The



*He had seen the rays of the midnight lamp tremble on many a lengthening
file of empty bottles.'*

company that frequented his house was the gayest of the gay. Scythrop danced with the ladies and drank with the gentlemen, and was pronounced by both a very accomplished charming fellow, and an honour to the university.

At the house of Mr. Hilary, Scythrop first saw the beautiful Miss Emily Girouette. He fell in love ; which is nothing new. He was favourably received ; which is nothing strange. Mr. Glowry and Mr. Girouette had a meeting on the occasion, and quarrelled about the terms of the bargain ; which is neither new nor strange. The lovers were torn asunder, weeping and vowing everlasting constancy ; and, in three weeks after this tragical event, the lady was led a smiling bride to the altar, by the Honourable Mr. Lackwit ; which is neither strange nor new.

Scythrop received this intelligence at Nightmare Abbey, and was half distracted on the occasion. It was his first disappointment, and preyed deeply on his sensitive spirit. His father, to comfort him, read him a Commentary on Ecclesiastes, which he had himself composed, and which demonstrated incontrovertibly that all is vanity. He insisted particularly on the text, 'One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman amongst all those have I not found.'

'How could he expect it,' said Scythrop, 'when the whole thousand were locked up in his seraglio ? His experience is no precedent for a free state of society like that in which we live.'

'Locked up or at large,' said Mr. Glowry, 'the result is the same : their minds are always locked up, and vanity and interest keep the key. I speak feelingly, Scythrop.'

'I am sorry for it, sir,' said Scythrop. 'But how is it that their minds are locked up ? The fault is in their artificial education, which studiously models them into mere musical dolls, to be set out for sale in the great toy-shop of society.'

'To be sure,' said Mr. Glowry, 'their education is not so well finished as yours has been ; and your idea of a musical doll is good. I bought one myself, but it was confoundedly out of tune ; but, whatever be the cause, Scythrop, the effect is certainly this, that one is pretty nearly as good as another, as far as any judgment can be formed of them before marriage. It is only after marriage that they show their true qualities, as I know by bitter experience. Marriage is, therefore, a lottery, and the less choice and selection a man bestows on his ticket

the better ; for, if he has incurred considerable pains and expense to obtain a lucky number, and his lucky number proves a blank, he experiences not a simple, but a complicated disappointment ; the loss of labour and money being superadded to the disappointment of drawing a blank, which, constituting simply and entirely the grievance of him who has chosen his ticket at random, is, from its simplicity, the more endurable.' This very excellent reasoning was thrown away upon Scythrop, who retired to his tower as dismal and disconsolate as before.

The tower which Scythrop inhabited stood at the south-eastern angle of the Abbey ; and, on the southern side, the foot of the tower opened on a terrace, which was called the garden, though nothing grew on it but ivy, and a few amphibious weeds. The south-western tower, which was ruinous and full of owls, might, with equal propriety, have been called the aviary. This terrace or garden, or terrace-garden, or garden-terrace (the reader may name it *ad libitum*), took in an oblique view of the open sea, and fronted a long tract of level sea-coast, and a fine monotony of fens and windmills.

The reader will judge, from what we have said, that this building was a sort of castellated abbey ; and it will, probably, occur to him to inquire if it had been one of the strongholds of the ancient church militant. Whether this was the case, or how far it had been indebted to the taste of Mr. Glowry's ancestors for any transmutations from its original state, are, unfortunately, circumstances not within the pale of our knowledge.

The north-western tower contained the apartments of Mr. Glowry. The moat at its base, and the fens beyond, comprised the whole of his prospect. This moat surrounded the Abbey, and was in immediate contact with the walls on every side but the south.

The north-eastern tower was appropriated to the domestics, whom Mr. Glowry always chose by one of two criterions,—a long face or a dismal name. His butler was Raven ; his steward was Crow ; his valet was Skellet. Mr. Glowry maintained that the valet was of French extraction, and that his name was Squelette. His grooms were Mattocks and Graves. On one occasion, being in want of a footman, he received a letter from a person signing himself Diggory Deaths-head, and lost no time in securing this acquisition ; but on



THE END

'He became like a double-charged electric jar, which often exploded in some burst of outrageous merriment, to the signal discomposure of Mr. Grouchy's nerves.'

Diggory's arrival, Mr. Glowry was horror-struck by the sight of a round, ruddy face, and a pair of laughing eyes. Death's-head was always grinning,—not a ghastly smile, but the grin of a comic mask; and disturbed the echoes of the hall with so much unhallowed laughter, that Mr. Glowry gave him his discharge. Diggory, however, had stayed long enough to make conquests of all the old gentleman's maids, and left him a flourishing colony of young Deathsheads to join chorus with the owls, that had before been the exclusive choristers of Nightmare Abbey.

The main body of the building was divided into rooms of state, spacious apartments for feasting, and numerous bedrooms for visitors, who, however, were few and far between.

Family interests compelled Mr. Glowry to receive occasional visits from Mr. and Mrs. Hilary, who paid them from the same motive; and, as the lively gentleman on these occasions found few conductors for his exuberant gaiety, he became like a double-charged electric jar, which often exploded in some burst of outrageous merriment, to the signal discomposure of Mr. Glowry's nerves.

Another occasional visitor, much more to Mr. Glowry's taste, was Mr. Flosky, a very lachrymose and morbid gentleman, of some note in the literary world, but in his own estimation of much more merit than name. The part of his character which recommended him to Mr. Glowry was his very fine sense of the grim and the tearful. No one could relate a dismal story with so many minutiae of supererogatory wretchedness. No one could call up a *raw head and bloody bones* with so many adjuncts and circumstances of ghastliness. Mystery was his mental element. He lived in the midst of that visionary world in which nothing is but what is not. He dreamed with his eyes open, and saw ghosts dancing round him at noontide. He had been in his youth an enthusiast for liberty, and had hailed the dawn of the French Revolution as the promise of a day that was to banish war and slavery, and every form of vice and misery, from the face of the earth. Because all this was not done, he deduced that nothing was done; and from this deduction, according to his system of logic, he drew a conclusion that worse than nothing was done; that the overthrow of the feudal fortresses of tyranny and superstition was the greatest calamity that had ever befallen

mankind ; and that their only hope now was to rake the rubbish together, and rebuild it without any of those loopholes by which the light had originally crept in. To qualify himself for a coadjutor in this laudable task, he plunged into the central opacity of Kantian metaphysics, and lay *perdu* several years in transcendental darkness, till the common daylight of common-sense became intolerable to his eyes. He called the sun an *ignis fatuus* ; and exhorted all who would listen to his friendly voice, which were about as many as called ‘ God save King Richard,’ to shelter themselves from its delusive radiance in the obscure haunt of Old Philosophy. This word Old had great charms for him. The good old times were always on his lips ; meaning the days when polemic theology was in its prime, and rival prelates beat the drum ecclesiastic with Herculean vigour, till the one wound up his series of syllogisms with the very orthodox conclusion of roasting the other.

But the dearest friend of Mr. Glowry, and his most welcome guest, was Mr. Toobad, the Manichæan Millenarian. The twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter of Revelations was always in his mouth : ‘ Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come among you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ He maintained that the supreme dominion of the world was, for wise purposes, given over for a while to the Evil Principle ; and that this precise period of time, commonly called the enlightened age, was the point of his plenitude of power. He used to add that by and by he would be cast down, and a high and happy order of things succeed ; but he never omitted the saving clause, ‘ Not in our time ’ : which last words were always echoed in doleful response by the sympathetic Mr. Glowry.

Another and very frequent visitor was the Reverend Mr. Larynx, the vicar of Claydyke, a village about ten miles distant ;—a good-natured accommodating divine, who was always most obligingly ready to take a dinner and a bed at the house of any country gentleman in distress for a companion. Nothing came amiss to him,—a game at billiards, at chess, at draughts, at backgammon, at piquet, or at all-fours in a *tête-à-tête*,—or any game on the cards, round, square, or triangular, in a party of any number exceeding two. He would even dance among friends, rather than that a lady, even if she were on the wrong side of thirty, should sit still for want of a



'Another and very frequent visitor was the Reverend Mr. Larynx, the vicar of Claydyke. Nothing came amiss to him,—a game at billiards.'



NIGHTMARE ABBEY

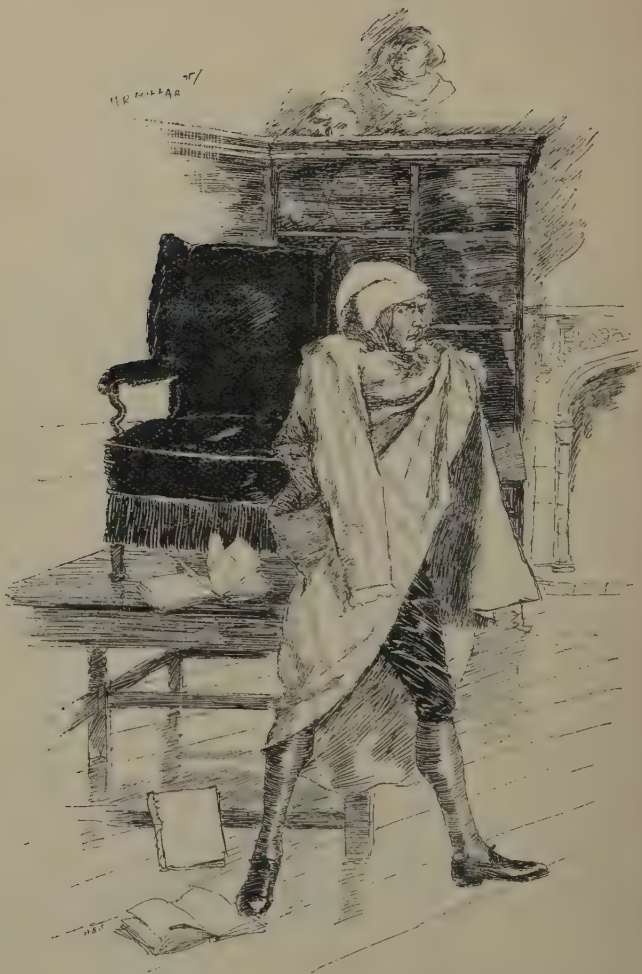
partner. For a ride, a walk, or a sail, in the morning,—a song after dinner, a ghost story after supper,—a bottle of port with the squire, or a cup of green tea with his lady,—for all or any of these, or for anything else that was agreeable to any one else, consistently with the dye of his coat, the Reverend Mr. Larynx was at all times equally ready. When at Nightmare Abbey, he would condole with Mr. Glowry,—drink Madeira with Scythrop,—crack jokes with Mr. Hilary,—hand Mrs. Hilary to the piano, take charge of her fan and gloves, and turn over her music with surprising dexterity,—quote Revelations with Mr. Toobad,—and lament the good old times of feudal darkness with the transcendental Mr. Flosky.

CHAPTER II

SHORTLY after the disastrous termination of Scythrop's passion for Miss Emily Girouette, Mr. Glowry found himself, much against his will, involved in a lawsuit, which compelled him to dance attendance on the High Court of Chancery. Scythrop was left alone at Nightmare Abbey. He was a burnt child, and dreaded the fire of female eyes. He wandered about the ample pile, or along the garden-terrace, with 'his cogitative faculties immersed in cogibundity of cogitation.' The terrace terminated at the south-western tower, which, as we have said, was ruinous and full of owls. Here would Scythrop take his evening seat on a fallen fragment of mossy stone, with his back resting against the ruined wall,—a thick canopy of ivy, with an owl in it, over his head,—and the Sorrows of Werter in his hand. He had some taste for romance-reading before he went to the university, where, we must confess, in justice to his college, he was cured of the love of reading in all its shapes; and the cure would have been radical, if disappointment in love, and total solitude, had not conspired to bring on a relapse. He began to devour romances and German tragedies, and, by the recommendation of Mr. Flosky, to pore over ponderous tomes of transcendental philosophy, which reconciled him to the labour of studying them by their mystical jargon and necromantic imagery. In the congenial solitude of Nightmare Abbey, the distempered ideas of metaphysical romance and romantic metaphysics had ample time and space to germinate into a fertile crop of chimeras, which rapidly shot up into vigorous and abundant vegetation.

He now became troubled with the *passion for reforming the world*.¹ He built many castles in the air, and peopled

¹ See Forsyth's *Principles of Moral Science*.



'He passed whole mornings in his study, immersed in gloomy reverie, stalking about the room in his nightcap.'

them with secret tribunals, and bands of illuminati, who were always the imaginary instruments of his projected regeneration of the human species. As he intended to institute a perfect republic, he invested himself with absolute sovereignty over these mystical dispensers of liberty. He slept with Horrid Mysteries under his pillow, and dreamed of venerable eleutharchs and ghastly confederates holding midnight conventions in subterranean caves. He passed whole mornings in his study, immersed in gloomy reverie, stalking about the room in his nightcap, which he pulled over his eyes like a cowl, and folding his striped calico dressing-gown about him like the mantle of a conspirator.

‘Action,’ thus he soliloquised, ‘is the result of opinion, and to new-model opinion would be to new-model society. Knowledge is power; it is in the hands of a few, who employ it to mislead the many, for their own selfish purposes of aggrandisement and appropriation. What if it were in the hands of a few who should employ it to lead the many? What if it were universal, and the multitude were enlightened? No. The many must be always in leading-strings; but let them have wise and honest conductors. A few to think, and many to act; that is the only basis of perfect society. So thought the ancient philosophers: they had their esoterical and exoterical doctrines. So thinks the sublime Kant, who delivers his oracles in language which none but the initiated can comprehend. Such were the views of those secret associations of illuminati, which were the terror of superstition and tyranny, and which, carefully selecting wisdom and genius from the great wilderness of society, as the bee selects honey from the flowers of the thorn and the nettle, bound all human excellence in a chain, which, if it had not been prematurely broken, would have commanded opinion, and regenerated the world.’

Scythrop proceeded to meditate on the practicability of reviving a confederation of regenerators. To get a clear view of his own ideas, and to feel the pulse of the wisdom and genius of the age, he wrote and published a treatise, in which his meanings were carefully wrapt up in the monk’s hood of transcendental technology, but filled with hints of matter deep and dangerous, which he thought would set the whole nation in a ferment; and he awaited the result in awful expectation, as a miner who has fired a train awaits the explosion of a rock.

However, he listened and heard nothing ; for the explosion, if any ensued, was not sufficiently loud to shake a single leaf of the ivy on the towers of Nightmare Abbey ; and some months afterwards he received a letter from his bookseller, informing him that only seven copies had been sold, and concluding with a polite request for the balance.

Scythrop did not despair. 'Seven copies,' he thought, 'have been sold. Seven is a mystical number, and the omen is good. Let me find the seven purchasers of my seven copies, and they shall be the seven golden candlesticks with which I will illuminate the world.'

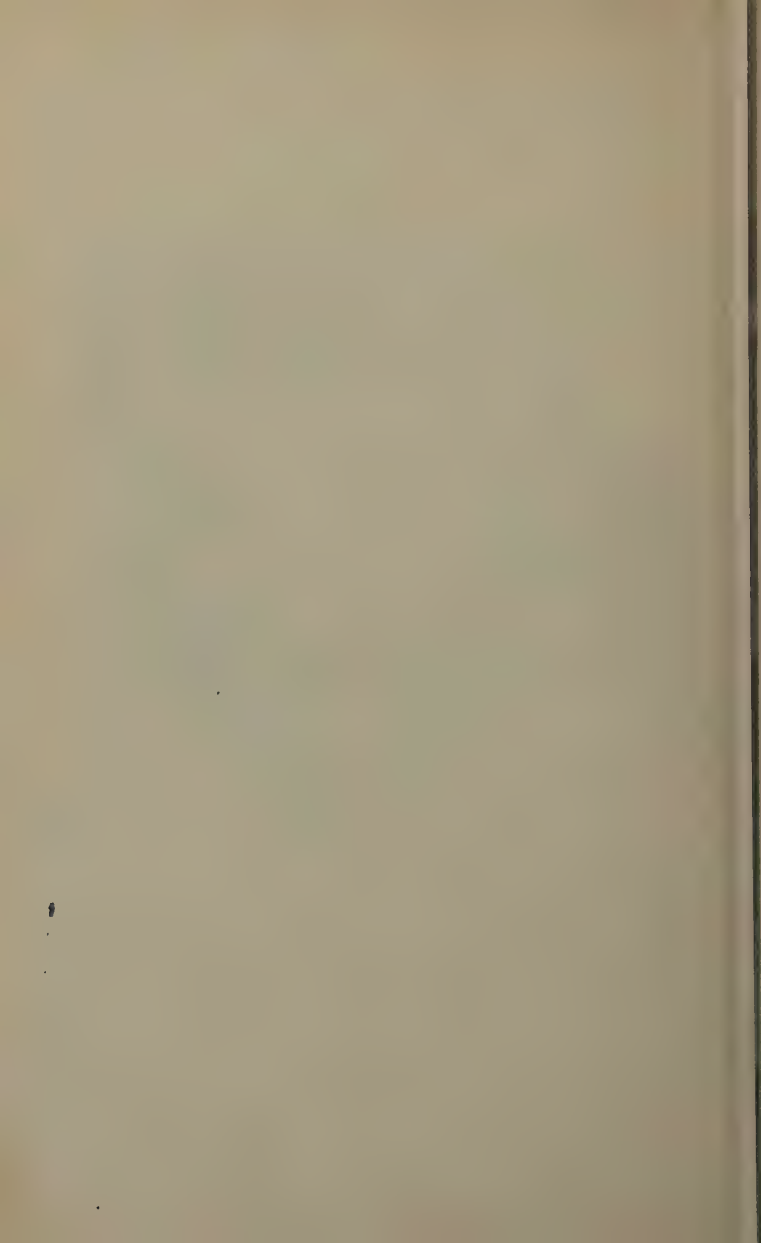
Scythrop had a certain portion of mechanical genius, which his romantic projects tended to develop. He constructed models of cells and recesses, sliding panels and secret passages, that would have baffled the skill of the Parisian police. He took the opportunity of his father's absence to smuggle a dumb carpenter into the Abbey, and between them they gave reality to one of these models in Scythrop's tower. Scythrop foresaw that a great leader of human regeneration would be involved in fearful dilemmas, and determined, for the benefit of mankind in general, to adopt all possible precautions for the preservation of himself.

The servants, even the women, had been tutored into silence. Profound stillness reigned throughout and around the Abbey, except when the occasional shutting of a door would peal in long reverberations through the galleries, or the heavy tread of the pensive butler would wake the hollow echoes of the hall. Scythrop stalked about like the grand inquisitor, and the servants flitted past him like familiars. In his evening meditations on the terrace, under the ivy of the ruined tower, the only sounds that came to his ear were the rustling of the wind in the ivy, the plaintive voices of the feathered choristers, the owls, the occasional striking of the Abbey clock, and the monotonous dash of the sea on its low and level shore. In the meantime, he drank Madeira, and laid deep schemes for a thorough repair of the crazy fabric of human nature.

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'He took the opportunity of his father's absence to smuggle a dumb carpenter into the Abbey, and between them they gave reality to one of these models in Scythrop's tower.'



CHAPTER III

MR. GLOWRY returned from London with the loss of his lawsuit. Justice was with him, but the law was against him. He found Scythrop in a mood most sympathetically tragic; and they vied with each other in enlivening their cups by lamenting the depravity of this degenerate age, and occasionally interspersing divers grim jokes about graves, worms, and epitaphs. Mr. Glowry's friends, whom we have mentioned in the first chapter, availed themselves of his return to pay him a simultaneous visit. At the same time arrived Scythrop's friend and fellow-collegian, the Honourable Mr. Listless. Mr. Glowry had discovered this fashionable young gentleman in London, 'stretched on the rack of a too easy chair,' and devoured with a gloomy and misanthropical *nil curo*, and had pressed him so earnestly to take the benefit of the pure country air, at Nightmare Abbey, that Mr. Listless, finding it would give him more trouble to refuse than to comply, summoned his French valet, Fatout, and told him he was going to Lincolnshire. On this simple hint, Fatout went to work, and the imperials were packed, and the post-chariot was at the door, without the Honourable Mr. Listless having said or thought another syllable on the subject.

Mr. and Mrs. Hilary brought with them an orphan niece, a daughter of Mr. Glowry's youngest sister, who had made a runaway love-match with an Irish officer. The lady's fortune disappeared in the first year: love, by a natural consequence, disappeared in the second: the Irishman himself, by a still more natural consequence, disappeared in the third. Mr. Glowry had allowed his sister an annuity, and she had lived in retirement with her only daughter, whom, at her death, which had recently happened, she commended to the care of Mrs. Hilary.

Miss Marionetta Celestina O'Carroll was a very blooming and accomplished young lady. Being a compound of the *Allegro Vivace* of the O'Carrolls, and of the *Andante Doloroso* of the Glowrys, she exhibited in her own character all the diversities of an April sky. Her hair was light-brown ; her eyes hazel, and sparkling with a mild but fluctuating light ; her features regular ; her lips full, and of equal size ; and her person surpassingly graceful. She was a proficient in music. Her conversation was sprightly, but always on subjects light in their nature and limited in their interest : for moral sympathies, in any general sense, had no place in her mind. She had some coquetry, and more caprice, liking and disliking almost in the same moment ; pursuing an object with earnestness while it seemed unattainable, and rejecting it when in her power as not worth the trouble of possession.

Whether she was touched with a *penchant* for her cousin Scythrop, or was merely curious to see what effect the tender passion would have on so *outré* a person, she had not been three days in the Abbey before she threw out all the lures of her beauty and accomplishments to make a prize of his heart. Scythrop proved an easy conquest. The image of Miss Emily Girouette was already sufficiently dimmed by the power of philosophy and the exercise of reason : for to these influences, or to any influence but the true one, are usually ascribed the mental cures performed by the great physician Time. Scythrop's romantic dreams had indeed given him many *pure anticipated cognitions* of combinations of beauty and intelligence, which, he had some misgivings, were not exactly realised in his cousin Marionetta ; but, in spite of these misgivings, he soon became distractedly in love ; which when the young lady clearly perceived, she altered her tactics, and assumed as much coldness and reserve as she had before shown ardent and ingenuous attachment. Scythrop was confounded at the sudden change ; but, instead of falling at her feet and requesting an explanation, he retreated to his tower, muffled himself in his nightcap, seated himself in the president's chair of his imaginary secret tribunal, summoned Marionetta with all terrible formalities, frightened her out of her wits, disclosed himself, and clasped the beautiful penitent to his bosom.

While he was acting this reverie—in the moment in which the awful president of the secret tribunal was throwing back



'She discovered him standing up before a black velvet chair, which was mounted on an old oak table, in the act of throwing open his striped calico dressing-gown, and flinging away his nightcap.'

his cowl and his mantle, and discovering himself to the lovely culprit as her adoring and magnanimous lover, the door of the study opened, and the real Marionetta appeared.

The motives which had led her to the tower were a little penitence, a little concern, a little affection, and a little fear as to what the sudden secession of Scythrop, occasioned by her sudden change of manner, might portend. She had tapped several times unheard, and of course unanswered; and at length, timidly and cautiously opening the door, she discovered him standing up before a black velvet chair, which was mounted on an old oak table, in the act of throwing open his striped calico dressing-gown, and flinging away his nightcap—which is what the French call an imposing attitude.

Each stood a few moments fixed in their respective places—the lady in astonishment, and the gentleman in confusion. Marionetta was the first to break silence. ‘For heaven’s sake,’ said she, ‘my dear Scythrop, what is the matter?’

‘For heaven’s sake, indeed!’ said Scythrop, springing from the table; ‘for your sake, Marionetta, and you are my heaven,—distraction is the matter. I adore you, Marionetta, and your cruelty drives me mad.’ He threw himself at her knees, devoured her hand with kisses, and breathed a thousand vows in the most passionate language of romance.

Marionetta listened a long time in silence, till her lover had exhausted his eloquence and paused for a reply. She then said, with a very arch look, ‘I prithee deliver thyself like a man of this world.’ The levity of this quotation, and of the manner in which it was delivered, jarred so discordantly on the high-wrought enthusiasm of the romantic innamorato, that he sprang upon his feet, and beat his forehead with his clenched fists. The young lady was terrified; and, deeming it expedient to soothe him, took one of his hands in hers, placed the other hand on his shoulder, looked up in his face with a winning seriousness, and said, in the tenderest possible tone, ‘What would you have, Scythrop?’

Scythrop was in heaven again. ‘What would I have? What but you, Marionetta? You, for the companion of my studies, the partner of my thoughts, the auxiliary of my great designs for the emancipation of mankind.’

‘I am afraid I should be but a poor auxiliary, Scythrop. What would you have me do?’

‘Do as Rosalia does with Carlos, divine Marionetta. Let us each open a vein in the other’s arm, mix our blood in a bowl, and drink it as a sacrament of love. Then we shall see visions of transcendental illumination, and soar on the wings of ideas into the space of pure intelligence.’

Marionetta could not reply ; she had not so strong a stomach as Rosalia, and turned sick at the proposition. She disengaged herself suddenly from Scythrop, sprang through the door of the tower, and fled with precipitation along the corridors. Scythrop pursued her, crying, ‘Stop, stop, Marionetta—my life, my love!’ and was gaining rapidly on her flight, when, at an ill-omened corner, where two corridors ended in an angle, at the head of a staircase, he came into sudden and violent contact with Mr. Toobad, and they both plunged together to the foot of the stairs, like two billiard-balls into one pocket. This gave the young lady time to escape, and enclose herself in her chamber ; while Mr. Toobad, rising slowly, and rubbing his knees and shoulders, said, ‘You see, my dear Scythrop, in this little incident, one of the innumerable proofs of the temporary supremacy of the devil ; for what but a systematic design and concurrent contrivance of evil could have made the angles of time and place coincide in our unfortunate persons at the head of this accursed staircase?’

‘Nothing else, certainly,’ said Scythrop : ‘you are perfectly in the right, Mr. Toobad. Evil, and mischief, and misery, and confusion, and vanity, and vexation of spirit, and death, and disease, and assassination, and war, and poverty, and pestilence, and famine, and avarice, and selfishness, and rancour, and jealousy, and spleen, and malevolence, and the disappointments of philanthropy, and the faithlessness of friendship, and the crosses of love—all prove the accuracy of your views, and the truth of your system ; and it is not impossible that the infernal interruption of this fall down stairs may throw a colour of evil on the whole of my future existence.’

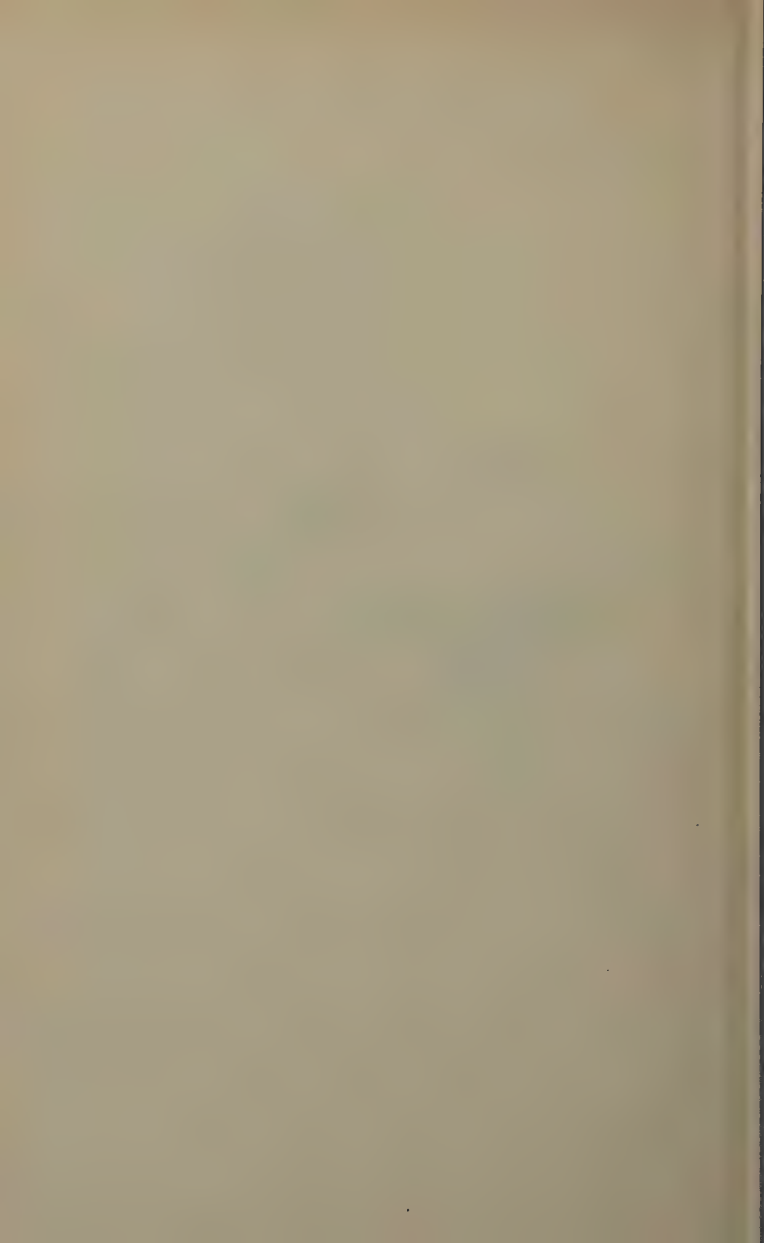
‘My dear boy,’ said Mr. Toobad, ‘you have a fine eye for consequences.’

So saying, he embraced Scythrop, who retired, with a disconsolate step, to dress for dinner ; while Mr. Toobad stalked across the hall, repeating, ‘Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea ! for the devil is come among you, having great wrath.’

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'At the head of a staircase, he came into sudden and violent contact with Mr. Toobad, and they both plunged together to the foot of the stairs, like two billiard-balls into one pocket.'



CHAPTER IV

THE flight of Marionetta, and the pursuit of Scythrop, had been witnessed by Mr. Glowry, who, in consequence, narrowly observed his son and his niece in the evening ; and, concluding from their manner that there was a better understanding between them than he wished to see, he determined on obtaining the next morning from Scythrop a full and satisfactory explanation. He, therefore, shortly after breakfast, entered Scythrop's tower, with a very grave face, and said, without ceremony or preface, ' So, sir, you are in love with your cousin.'

Scythrop, with as little hesitation, answered, ' Yes, sir.'

' That is candid, at least ; and she is in love with you.'

' I wish she were, sir.'

' You know she is, sir.'

' Indeed, sir, I do not.'

' But you hope she is.'

' I do, from my soul.'

' Now, that is very provoking, Scythrop, and very disappointing : I could not have supposed that you, Scythrop Glowry, of Nightmare Abbey, would have been infatuated with such a dancing, laughing, singing, thoughtless, careless, merry-hearted thing, as Marionetta—in all respects the reverse of you and me. It is very disappointing, Scythrop. And do you know, sir, that Marionetta has no fortune ?'

' It is the more reason, sir, that her husband should have one.'

' The more reason for her ; but not for you. My wife had no fortune, and I had no consolation in my calamity. And do you reflect, sir, what an enormous slice this lawsuit has cut out of our family estate ? we who used to be the greatest landed proprietors in Lincolnshire.'

NIGHTMARE ABBEY

‘To be sure, sir, we had more acres of fen than any man on this coast: but what are fens to love? What are dykes and windmills to Marionetta?’

‘And what, sir, is love to a windmill? Not grist, I am certain: besides, sir, I have made a choice for you. I have made a choice for you, Scythrop. Beauty, genius, accomplishments, and a great fortune into the bargain. Such a lovely, serious creature, in a fine state of high dissatisfaction with the world, and everything in it. Such a delightful surprise I had prepared for you. Sir, I have pledged my honour to the contract—the honour of the Glowrys of Nightmare Abbey: and now, sir, what is to be done?’

‘Indeed, sir, I cannot say. I claim, on this occasion, that liberty of action which is the co-natal prerogative of every rational being.’

‘Liberty of action, sir? there is no such thing as liberty of action. We are all slaves and puppets of a blind and unpathetic necessity.’

‘Very true, sir; but liberty of action, between individuals, consists in their being differently influenced, or modified, by the same universal necessity; so that the results are unconsentaneous, and their respective necessitated volitions clash and fly off in a tangent.’

‘Your logic is good, sir: but you are aware, too, that one individual may be a medium of adhibiting to another a mode or form of necessity, which may have more or less influence in the production of consentaneity; and, therefore, sir, if you do not comply with my wishes in this instance (you have had your own way in everything else), I shall be under the necessity of disinheriting you, though I shall do it with tears in my eyes.’ Having said these words, he vanished suddenly, in the dread of Scythrop’s logic.

Mr. Glowry immediately sought Mrs. Hilary, and communicated to her his views of the case in point. Mrs. Hilary, as the phrase is, was as fond of Marionetta as if she had been her own child: but—there is always a *but* on these occasions—she could do nothing for her in the way of fortune, as she had two hopeful sons, who were finishing their education at Brazen-nose, and who would not like to encounter any diminution of their prospects, when they should be brought out of the house of mental bondage—*i.e.* the university—to



'Scythrop snatched from its repository his ancestor's skull, filled it with Madeira, and presenting himself before Mr. Glowry, threatened to drink off the contents.'

the land flowing with milk and honey—*i.e.* the west end of London.

Mrs. Hilary hinted to Marionetta, that propriety, and delicacy, and decorum, and dignity, etc. etc. etc.¹ would require them to leave the Abbey immediately. Marionetta listened in silent submission, for she knew that her inheritance was passive obedience; but, when Scythrop, who had watched the opportunity of Mrs. Hilary's departure, entered, and, without speaking a word, threw himself at her feet in a paroxysm of grief, the young lady, in equal silence and sorrow, threw her arms round his neck and burst into tears. A very tender scene ensued, which the sympathetic susceptibilities of the soft-hearted reader can more accurately imagine than we can delineate. But when Marionetta hinted that she was to leave the Abbey immediately, Scythrop snatched from its repository his ancestor's skull, filled it with Madeira, and presenting himself before Mr. Glowry, threatened to drink off the contents if Mr. Glowry did not immediately promise that Marionetta should not be taken from the Abbey without her own consent. Mr. Glowry, who took the Madeira to be some deadly brewage, gave the required promise in dismal panic. Scythrop returned to Marionetta with a joyful heart, and drank the Madeira by the way.

Mr. Glowry, during his residence in London, had come to an agreement with his friend Mr. Toobad, that a match between Scythrop and Mr. Toobad's daughter would be a very desirable occurrence. She was finishing her education in a German convent, but Mr. Toobad described her as being fully impressed with the truth of his Ahrimanic² philosophy, and being

¹ We are not masters of the whole vocabulary. See any novel by any literary lady.

² Ahrimanes, in the Persian mythology, is the evil power, the prince of the kingdom of darkness. He is the rival of Oromazes, the prince of the kingdom of light. These two powers have divided and equal dominion. Sometimes one of the two has a temporary supremacy.—According to Mr. Toobad, the present period would be the reign of Ahrimanes. Lord Byron seems to be of the same opinion, by the use he has made of Ahrimanes in 'Manfred'; where the great Alastor, or *Kakos Daimon*, of Persia, is hailed king of the world by the Nemesis of Greece in concert with three of the Scandinavian Valkyræ, under the name of the Destinies; the astrological spirits of the alchemists of the Middle Ages; an elemental witch, transplanted from Denmark to the Alps; and a chorus of Dr. Faustus's devils, who come in the last act for a soul. It is difficult to

altogether as gloomy and antithalian a young lady as Mr. Glowry himself could desire for the future mistress of Nightmare Abbey. She had a great fortune in her own right, which was not, as we have seen, without its weight in inducing Mr. Glowry to set his heart upon her as his daughter-in-law that was to be; he was therefore very much disturbed by Scythrop's untoward attachment to Marionetta. He condoled on the occasion with Mr. Toobad; who said, that he had been too long accustomed to the intermeddling of the devil in all his affairs, to be astonished at this new trace of his cloven claw; but that he hoped to outwit him yet, for he was sure there could be no comparison between his daughter and Marionetta in the mind of any one who had a proper perception of the fact that, the world being a great theatre of evil, seriousness and solemnity are the characteristics of wisdom, and laughter and merriment make a human being no better than a baboon. Mr. Glowry comforted himself with this view of the subject, and urged Mr. Toobad to expedite his daughter's return from Germany. Mr. Toobad said he was in daily expectation of her arrival in London, and would set off immediately to meet her, that he might lose no time in bringing her to Nightmare Abbey. 'Then,' he added, 'we shall see whether Thalia or Melpomene—whether the Allegra or the Penserosa—will carry off the symbol of victory.'—'There can be no doubt,' said Mr. Glowry, 'which way the scale will incline, or Scythrop is no true scion of the venerable stem of the Glowrys.'

conceive where this heterogeneous mythological company could have originally met, except at a *table d'hôte*, like the six kings in 'Candide.'

CHAPTER V

MARIONETTA felt secure of Scythrop's heart ; and, notwithstanding the difficulties that surrounded her, she could not debar herself from the pleasure of tormenting her lover, whom she kept in a perpetual fever. Sometimes she would meet him with the most unqualified affection ; sometimes with the most chilling indifference ; rousing him to anger by artificial coldness—softening him to love by eloquent tenderness—or inflaming him to jealousy by coquetting with the Honourable Mr. Listless, who seemed, under her magical influence, to burst into sudden life, like the bud of the evening primrose. Sometimes she would sit by the piano, and listen with becoming attention to Scythrop's pathetic remonstrances ; but, in the most impassioned part of his oratory, she would convert all his ideas into a chaos, by striking up some Rondo Allegro, and saying, 'Is it not pretty?' Scythrop would begin to storm ; and she would answer him with

‘ Zitto, zitto, piano, piano,
Non facciamo confusione,’

or some similar *facezia*, till he would start away from her, and enclose himself in his tower, in an agony of agitation, vowing to renounce her, and her whole sex, for ever ; and returning to her presence at the summons of the billet, which she never failed to send with many expressions of penitence and promises of amendment. Scythrop's schemes for regenerating the world, and detecting his seven golden candlesticks, went on very slowly in this fever of his spirit.

Things proceeded in this train for several days ; and Mr. Glowry began to be uneasy at receiving no intelligence from Mr. Toobad ; when one evening the latter rushed into the library, where the family and the visitors were assembled,

vociferating, 'The devil is come among you, having great wrath!' He then drew Mr. Glowry aside into another apartment, and after remaining some time together, they re-entered the library with faces of great dismay, but did not condescend to explain to any one the cause of their discomfiture.

The next morning, early, Mr. Toobad departed. Mr. Glowry sighed and groaned all day, and said not a word to any one. Scythrop had quarrelled, as usual, with Marionetta, and was enclosed in his tower, in a fit of morbid sensibility. Marionetta was comforting herself at the piano, with singing the airs of *Nina pazzo per amore*; and the Honourable Mr. Listless was listening to the harmony, as he lay supine on the sofa, with a book in his hand, into which he peeped at intervals. The Reverend Mr. Larynx approached the sofa, and proposed a game at billiards.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Billiards! Really I should be very happy; but, in my present exhausted state, the exertion is too much for me. I do not know when I have been equal to such an effort. (*He rang the bell for his valet. Fatout entered.*) Fatout! when did I play at billiards last?

Fatout. De fourteen December de last year, Monsieur. (*Fatout bowed and retired.*)

The Honourable Mr. Listless. So it was. Seven months ago. You see, Mr. Larynx; you see, sir. My nerves, Miss O'Carroll, my nerves are shattered. I have been advised to try Bath. Some of the faculty recommend Cheltenham. I think of trying both, as the seasons don't clash. The season, you know, Mr. Larynx—the season, Miss O'Carroll—the season is everything.

Marionetta. And health is something. *N'est-ce pas*, Mr. Larynx?

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. Most assuredly, Miss O'Carroll. For, however reasoners may dispute about the *summum bonum*, none of them will deny that a very good dinner is a very good thing: and what is a good dinner without a good appetite? and whence is a good appetite but from good health? Now, Cheltenham, Mr. Listless, is famous for good appetites.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. The best piece of logic I ever heard, Mr. Larynx; the very best, I assure you. I have thought very seriously of Cheltenham: very seriously and profoundly. I thought of it—let me see—when did I think of it?

(*He rang again, and Fatout reappeared.*) Fatout! when did I think of going to Cheltenham, and did not go?

Fatout. De Juillet twenty-von, de last summer, Monsieur. (*Fatout retired.*)

The Honourable Mr. Listless. So it was. An invaluable fellow that, Mr. Larynx—invaluable, Miss O'Carroll.

Marionetta. So I should judge, indeed. He seems to serve you as a walking memory, and to be a living chronicle, not of your actions only, but of your thoughts.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. An excellent definition of the fellow, Miss O'Carroll,—excellent, upon my honour. Ha! ha! he! Heigho! Laughter is pleasant, but the exertion is too much for me.

A parcel was brought in for Mr. Listless; it had been sent express. Fatout was summoned to unpack it; and it proved to contain a new novel, and a new poem, both of which had long been anxiously expected by the whole host of fashionable readers; and the last number of a popular Review, of which the editor and his coadjutors were in high favour at court, and enjoyed ample pensions¹ for their services to church and state. As Fatout left the room, Mr. Flosky entered, and curiously inspected the literary arrivals.

Mr. Flosky (turning over the leaves). 'Devilman, a novel.' Hm. Hatred—revenge—misanthropy—and quotations from the Bible. Hm. This is the morbid anatomy of black bile.—'Paul Jones, a poem.' Hm. I see how it is. Paul Jones, an amiable enthusiast—disappointed in his affections—turns pirate from ennui and magnanimity—cuts various masculine throats, wins various feminine hearts—is hanged at the yard-arm! The catastrophe is very awkward, and very unpoetical.—*The Downing Street Review.* Hm. First article—An Ode to the Red Book, by Roderick Sackbut, Esquire. Hm. His own poem reviewed by himself. Hm-m-m.

(*Mr. Flosky proceeded in silence to look over the other articles of the review; Marionetta inspected the novel and Mr. Listless the poem.*)

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. For a young man of fashion and family, Mr. Listless, you seem to be of a very studious turn.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Studious! You are pleased

¹ 'PENSION. Pay given to a slave of state for treason to his country,'—JOHNSON'S *Dictionary*.

to be facetious, Mr. Larynx. I hope you do not suspect me of being studious. I have finished my education. But there are some fashionable books that one must read, because they are ingredients of the talk of the day; otherwise, I am no fonder of books than I daresay you yourself are, Mr. Larynx.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. Why, sir, I cannot say that I am indeed particularly fond of books; yet neither can I say that I never do read. A tale or a poem, now and then, to a circle of ladies over their work, is no very heterodox employment of the vocal energy. And I must say, for myself, that few men have a more Job-like endurance of the eternally-recurring questions and answers that interweave themselves, on these occasions, with the crisis of an adventure, and heighten the distress of a tragedy.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. And very often make the distress when the author has omitted it.

Marionetta. I shall try your patience some rainy morning, Mr. Larynx: and Mr. Listless shall recommend us the very newest new book, that everybody reads.

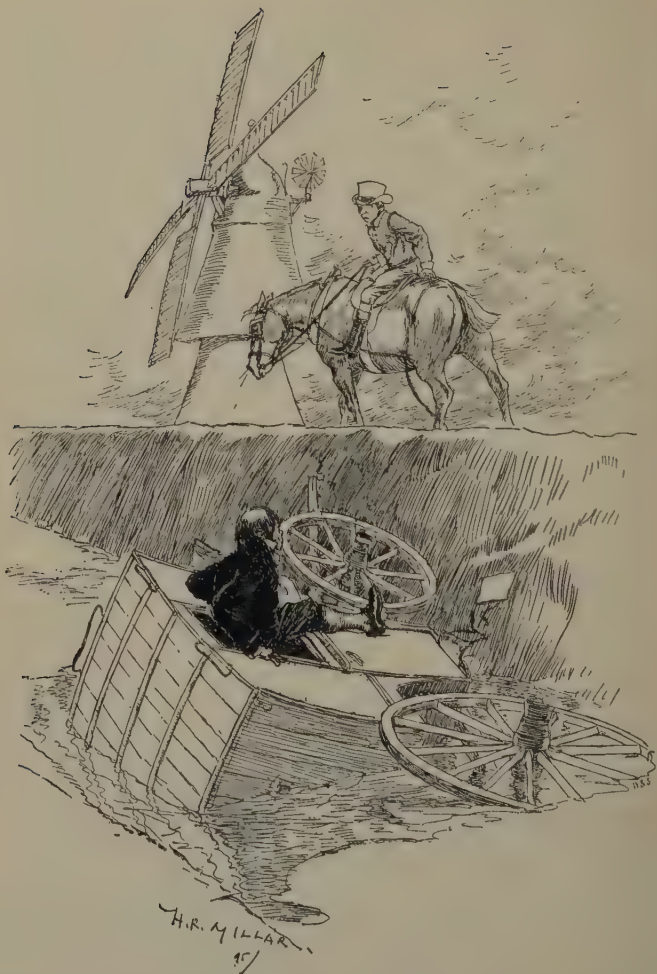
The Honourable Mr. Listless. You shall receive it, Miss O'Carroll, with all the gloss of novelty; fresh as a ripe green-gage in all the downiness of its bloom. A mail-coach copy from Edinburgh, forwarded express from London.

Mr. Flosky. This rage for novelty is the bane of literature. Except my works and those of my particular friends, nothing is good that is not as old as Jeremy Taylor: and, *entre nous*, the best parts of my friends' books were either written or suggested by myself.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Sir, I reverence you. But I must say, modern books are very consolatory and congenial to my feelings. There is, as it were, a delightful north-east wind, an intellectual blight breathing through them; a delicious misanthropy and discontent, that demonstrates the nullity of virtue and energy, and puts me in good humour with myself and my sofa.

Mr. Flosky. Very true, sir. Modern literature is a north-east wind—a blight of the human soul. I take credit to myself for having helped to make it so. The way to produce fine fruit is to blight the flower. You call this a paradox. Marry, so be it. Ponder thereon.

The conversation was interrupted by the reappearance of



'Into one of these ditches the sudden action of a shy horse, which took fright at a windmill, had precipitated the travelling chariot of Mr. Toobad.'

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Mr. Toobad, covered with mud. He just showed himself at the door, muttered 'The devil is come among you!' and vanished. The road which connected Nightmare Abbey with the civilised world was artificially raised above the level of the fens, and ran through them in a straight line as far as the eye could reach, with a ditch on each side, of which the water was rendered invisible by the aquatic vegetation that covered the surface. Into one of these ditches the sudden action of a shy horse, which took fright at a windmill, had precipitated the travelling chariot of Mr. Toobad, who had been reduced to the necessity of scrambling in dismal plight through the window. One of the wheels was found to be broken; and Mr. Toobad, leaving the postilion to get the chariot as well as he could to Claydyke for the purposes of cleaning and repairing, had walked back to Nightmare Abbey, followed by his servant with the imperial, and repeating all the way his favourite quotation from the Revelations.

CHAPTER VI

MR. TOOBAD had found his daughter Celinda in London, and after the first joy of meeting was over, told her he had a husband ready for her. The young lady replied, very gravely, that she should take the liberty to choose for herself. Mr. Toobad said he saw the devil was determined to interfere with all his projects, but he was resolved, on his own part, not to have on his conscience the crime of passive obedience and non-resistance to Lucifer, and therefore she should marry the person he had chosen for her. Miss Toobad replied, *très posément*, she assuredly would not. 'Celinda, Celinda,' said Mr. Toobad, 'you most assuredly shall.'—'Have I not a fortune in my own right, sir?' said Celinda. 'The more is the pity,' said Mr. Toobad: 'but I can find means, miss; I can find means. There are more ways than one of breaking in obstinate girls.' They parted for the night with the expression of opposite resolutions, and in the morning the young lady's chamber was found empty, and what was become of her Mr. Toobad had no clue to conjecture. He continued to investigate town and country in search of her; visiting and revisiting Nightmare Abbey at intervals, to consult with his friend Mr. Glowry. Mr. Glowry agreed with Mr. Toobad that this was a very flagrant instance of filial disobedience and rebellion; and Mr. Toobad declared, that when he discovered the fugitive, she should find that 'the devil was come unto her, having great wrath.'

In the evening, the whole party met, as usual, in the library. Marionetta sat at the harp; the Honourable Mr. Listless sat by her and turned over her music, though the exertion was almost too much for him. The Reverend Mr. Larynx relieved him occasionally in this delightful labour. Scythrop, tormented

by the demon Jealousy, sat in the corner biting his lips and fingers. Marionetta looked at him every now and then with a smile of most provoking good humour, which he pretended not to see, and which only the more exasperated his troubled spirit. He took down a volume of Dante, and pretended to be deeply interested in the Purgatorio, though he knew not a word he was reading, as Marionetta was well aware; who, tripping across the room, peeped into his book, and said to him, 'I see you are in the middle of Purgatory.'—'I am in the middle of hell,' said Scythrop furiously. 'Are you?' said she; 'then come across the room, and I will sing you the finale of Don Giovanni.'

'Let me alone,' said Scythrop. Marionetta looked at him with a deprecating smile, and said, 'You unjust, cross creature, you.'—'Let me alone,' said Scythrop, but much less emphatically than at first, and by no means wishing to be taken at his word. Marionetta left him immediately, and returning to the harp, said, just loud enough for Scythrop to hear—'Did you ever read Dante, Mr. Listless? Scythrop is reading Dante, and is just now in Purgatory.'—'And I,' said the Honourable Mr. Listless, 'am not reading Dante, and am just now in Paradise,' bowing to Marionetta.

Marionetta. You are very gallant, Mr. Listless; and I daresay you are very fond of reading Dante.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. I don't know how it is, but Dante never came in my way till lately. I never had him in my collection, and if I had had him I should not have read him. But I find he is growing fashionable, and I am afraid I must read him some wet morning.

Marionetta. No, read him some evening, by all means. Were you ever in love, Mr. Listless?

The Honourable Mr. Listless. I assure you, Miss O'Carroll, never—till I came to Nightmare Abbey. I daresay it is very pleasant; but it seems to give so much trouble that I fear the exertion would be too much for me.

Marionetta. Shall I teach you a compendious method of courtship, that will give you no trouble whatever?

The Honourable Mr. Listless. You will confer on me an inexpressible obligation. I am all impatience to learn it.

Marionetta. Sit with your back to the lady and read Dante; only be sure to begin in the middle, and turn over three or four pages at once—backwards as well as forwards,

and she will immediately perceive that you are desperately in love with her—desperately.

(The Honourable Mr. Listless, sitting between Scythrop and Marionetta, and fixing all his attention on the beautiful speaker, did not observe Scythrop, who was doing as she described.)

The Honourable Mr. Listless. You are pleased to be facetious, Miss O'Carroll. The lady would infallibly conclude that I was the greatest brute in town.

Marionetta. Far from it. She would say, perhaps, some people have odd methods of showing their affection.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. But I should think, with submission——

Mr. Flosky (joining them from another part of the room). Did I not hear Mr. Listless observe that Dante is becoming fashionable?

The Honourable Mr. Listless. I did hazard a remark to that effect, Mr. Flosky, though I speak on such subjects with a consciousness of my own nothingness, in the presence of so great a man as Mr. Flosky. I know not what is the colour of Dante's devils, but as he is certainly becoming fashionable I conclude they are blue; for the blue devils, as it seems to me, Mr. Flosky, constitute the fundamental feature of fashionable literature.

Mr. Flosky. The blue are, indeed, the staple commodity; but as they will not always be commanded, the black, red, and grey may be admitted as substitutes. Tea, late dinners, and the French Revolution, have played the devil, Mr. Listless, and brought the devil into play.

Mr. Toobad (starting up). Having great wrath.

Mr. Flosky. This is no play upon words, but the sober sadness of veritable fact.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Tea, late dinners, and the French Revolution. I cannot exactly see the connection of ideas.

Mr. Flosky. I should be sorry if you could; I pity the man who can see the connection of his own ideas. Still more do I pity him, the connection of whose ideas any other person can see. Sir, the great evil is, that there is too much commonplace light in our moral and political literature; and light is a great enemy to mystery, and mystery is a great friend to



'The Honourable Mr. Listless sitting between Scythrop and Marionetta, and fixing all his attention on the beautiful speaker, did not observe Scythrop.'

enthusiasm. Now the enthusiasm for abstract truth is an exceedingly fine thing, as long as the truth which is the object of the enthusiasm is so completely abstract as to be altogether out of the reach of the human faculties ; and, in that sense, I have myself an enthusiasm for truth, but in no other, for the pleasure of metaphysical investigation lies in the means, not in the end ; and if the end could be found, the pleasure of the means would cease. The mind, to be kept in health, must be kept in exercise. The proper exercise of the mind is elaborate reasoning. Analytical reasoning is a base and mechanical process, which takes to pieces and examines, bit by bit, the rude material of knowledge, and extracts therefrom a few hard and obstinate things called facts, everything in the shape of which I cordially hate. But synthetical reasoning, setting up as its goal some unattainable abstraction, like an imaginary quantity in algebra, and commencing its course with taking for granted some two assertions which cannot be proved, from the union of these two assumed truths produces a third assumption, and so on in infinite series, to the unspeakable benefit of the human intellect. The beauty of this process is, that at every step it strikes out into two branches, in a compound ratio of ramification ; so that you are perfectly sure of losing your way, and keeping your mind in perfect health, by the perpetual exercise of an interminable quest ; and for these reasons I have christened my eldest son Emanuel Kant Flosky.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. Nothing can be more luminous.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. And what has all that to do with Dante and the blue devils ?

Mr. Hilary. Not much, I should think, with Dante, but a great deal with the blue devils.

Mr. Flosky. It is very certain, and much to be rejoiced at, that our literature is hag-ridden. Tea has shattered our nerves ; late dinners make us slaves of indigestion ; the French Revolution has made us shrink from the name of philosophy, and has destroyed, in the more refined part of the community (of which number I am one), all enthusiasm for political liberty. That part of the *reading public* which shuns the solid food of reason for the light diet of fiction requires a perpetual adhibition of *sauce piquante* to the palate of its depraved imagination. It lived upon ghosts, goblins, and skeletons (I and my friend Mr. Sackbut served up a few of the best), till even the devil

himself, though magnified to the size of Mount Athos, became too base, common, and popular, for its surfeited appetite. The ghosts have therefore been laid, and the devil has been cast into outer darkness, and now the delight of our spirits is to dwell on all the vices and blackest passions of our nature, tricked out in a masquerade dress of heroism and disappointed benevolence ; the whole secret of which lies in forming combinations that contradict all our experience, and affixing the purple shred of some particular virtue to that precise character in which we should be most certain not to find it in the living world ; and making this single virtue not only redeem all the real and manifest vices of the character, but make them actually pass for necessary adjuncts and indispensable accompaniments and characteristics of the said virtue.

Mr. Toobad. That is, because the devil is come among us, and finds it for his interest to destroy all our perceptions of the distinctions of right and wrong.

Marionetta. I do not precisely enter into your meaning, Mr. Flosky, and should be glad if you would make it a little more plain to me.

Mr. Flosky. One or two examples will do it, Miss O'Carroll. If I were to take all the mean and sordid qualities of a money-dealing Jew, and tack on to them, as with a nail, the quality of extreme benevolence, I should have a very decent hero for a modern novel ; and should contribute my quota to the fashionable method of administering a mass of vice, under a thin and unnatural covering of virtue, like a spider wrapt in a bit of gold leaf, and administered as a wholesome pill. On the same principle, if a man knocks me down, and takes my purse and watch by main force, I turn him to account, and set him forth in a tragedy as a dashing young fellow, disinherited for his romantic generosity, and full of a most amiable hatred of the world in general, and his own country in particular, and of a most enlightened and chivalrous affection for himself : then, with the addition of a wild girl to fall in love with him, and a series of adventures in which they break all the Ten Commandments in succession (always, you will observe, for some sublime motive, which must be carefully analysed in its progress), I have as amiable a pair of tragic characters as ever issued from that new region of the belles lettres which I have called the Morbid Anatomy of Black

Bile, and which is greatly to be admired and rejoiced at, as affording a fine scope for the exhibition of mental power.

Mr. Hilary. Which is about as well employed as the power of a hothouse would be in forcing up a nettle to the size of an elm. If we go on in this way, we shall have a new art of poetry, of which one of the first rules will be: To remember to forget that there are any such things as sunshine and music in the world.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. It seems to be the case with us at present, or we should not have interrupted Miss O'Carroll's music with this exceedingly dry conversation.

Mr. Flosky. I should be most happy if Miss O'Carroll would remind us that there are yet both music and sunshine——

The Honourable Mr. Listless. In the voice and the smile of beauty. May I entreat the favour of—(*turning over the pages of music*).

All were silent, and Marionetta sang:—

Why are thy looks so blank, grey friar?
 Why are thy looks so blue?
 Thou seem'st more pale and lank, grey friar,
 Than thou wast used to do:—
 Say, what has made thee rue?

Thy form was plump, and a light did shine
 In thy round and ruby face,
 Which showed an outward visible sign
 Of an inward spiritual grace:—
 Say, what has changed thy case?

Yet will I tell thee true, grey friar,
 I very well can see,
 That, if thy looks are blue, grey friar,
 'Tis all for love of me,—
 'Tis all for love of me.

But breathe not thy vows to me, grey friar,
 Oh, breathe them not, I pray;
 For ill beseems in a reverend friar,
 The love of a mortal may;
 And I needs must say thee nay.

But, could'st thou think my heart to move
 With that pale and silent scowl?

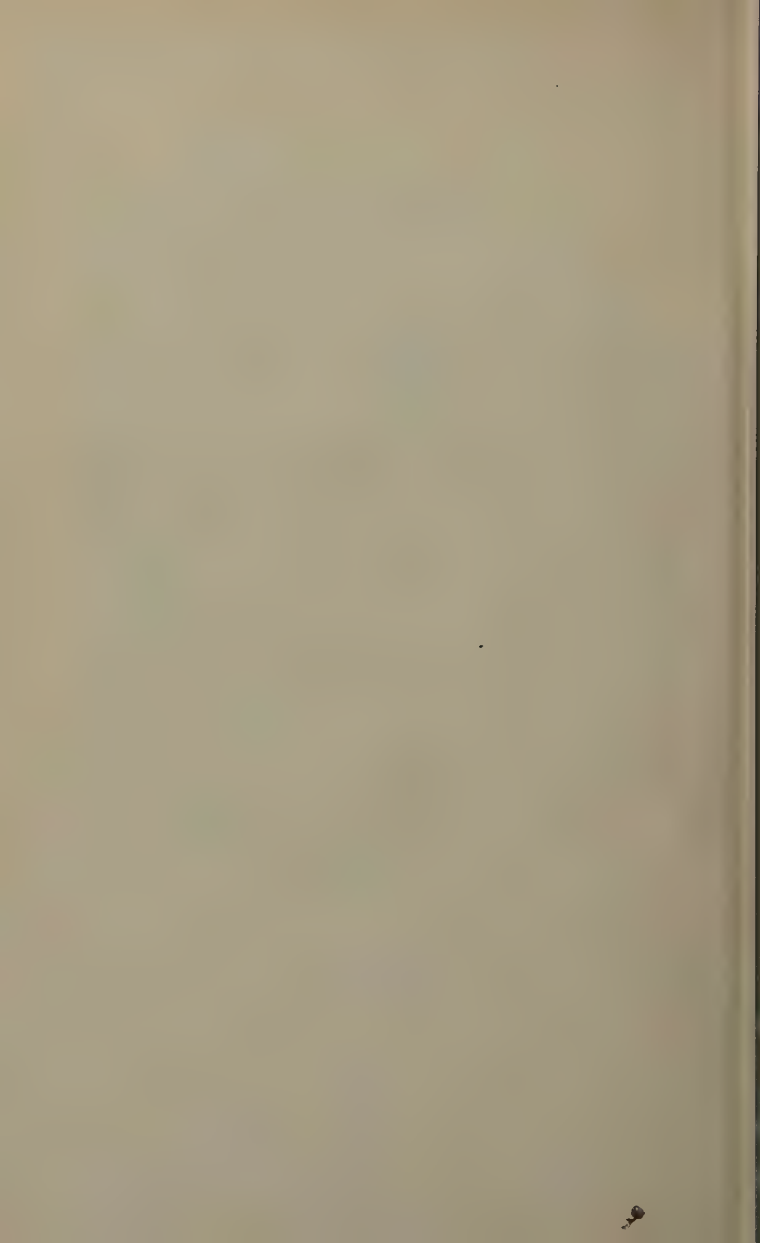
NIGHTMARE ABBEY

Know, he who would win a maiden's love,
Whether clad in cap or cowl,
Must be more of a lark than an owl.

Scythrop immediately replaced Dante on the shelf, and joined the circle round the beautiful singer. Marionetta gave him a smile of approbation that fully restored his complacency, and they continued on the best possible terms during the remainder of the evening. The Honourable Mr. Listless turned over the leaves with double alacrity, saying, 'You are severe upon invalids, Miss O'Carroll: to escape your satire I must try to be sprightly, though the exertion is too much for me.'



'Scythrop immediately replaced Dante on the shelf, and joined the circle round the beautiful singer.'



CHAPTER VII

A NEW visitor arrived at the Abbey, in the person of Mr. Asterias, the ichthyologist. This gentleman had passed his life in seeking the living wonders of the deep through the four quarters of the world; he had a cabinet of stuffed and dried fishes, of shells, sea-weeds, corals, and madrepores, that was the admiration and envy of the Royal Society. He had penetrated into the watery den of the Sepia Octopus, disturbed the conjugal happiness of that turtle-dove of the ocean, and come off victorious in a sanguinary conflict. He had been becalmed in the tropical seas, and had watched, in eager expectation, though unhappily always in vain, to see the colossal polypus rise from the water, and entwine its enormous arms round the masts and the rigging. He maintained the origin of all things from water, and insisted that the polypodes were the first of animated things, and that from their round bodies and many-shooting arms the Hindoos had taken their gods, the most ancient of deities. But the chief object of his ambition, the end and aim of his researches, was to discover a triton and a mermaid, the existence of which he most potently and implicitly believed, and was prepared to demonstrate, *a priori*, *a posteriori*, *a fortiori*, synthetically and analytically, syllogistically and inductively, by arguments deduced both from acknowledged facts and plausible hypotheses. A report that a mermaid had been seen 'sleeking her soft alluring locks' on the sea-coast of Lincolnshire had brought him in great haste from London, to pay a long-promised and often-postponed visit to his old acquaintance, Mr. Glowry.

Mr. Asterias was accompanied by his son, to whom he had given the name of Aquarius—flattering himself that he would,

in the process of time, become a constellation among the stars of ichthyological science. What charitable female had lent him the mould in which this son was cast, no one pretended to know ; and, as he never dropped the most distant allusion to Aquarius's mother, some of the wags of London maintained that he had received the favours of a mermaid, and that the scientific perquisitions which kept him always prowling about the sea-shore were directed by the less philosophical motive of regaining his lost love.

Mr. Asterias perlrustated the sea-coast for several days, and reaped disappointment, but not despair. One night, shortly after his arrival, he was sitting in one of the windows of the library, looking towards the sea, when his attention was attracted by a figure which was moving near the edge of the surf, and which was dimly visible through the moonless summer night. Its motions were irregular, like those of a person in a state of indecision. It had extremely long hair, which floated in the wind. Whatever else it might be, it certainly was not a fisherman. It might be a lady ; but it was neither Mrs. Hilary nor Miss O'Carroll, for they were both in the library. It might be one of the female servants ; but it had too much grace, and too striking an air of habitual liberty, to render it probable. Besides, what should one of the female servants be doing there at this hour, moving to and fro, as it seemed, without any visible purpose ? It could scarcely be a stranger ; for Claydyke, the nearest village, was ten miles distant ; and what female would come ten miles across the fens, for no purpose but to hover over the surf under the walls of Nightmare Abbey ? Might it not be a mermaid ? It was possibly a mermaid. It was probably a mermaid. It was very probably a mermaid. Nay, what else could it be but a mermaid ? It certainly was a mermaid. Mr. Asterias stole out of the library on tiptoe, with his finger on his lips, having beckoned Aquarius to follow him.

The rest of the party was in great surprise at Mr. Asterias's movement, and some of them approached the window to see if the locality would tend to elucidate the mystery. Presently they saw him and Aquarius cautiously stealing along on the other side of the moat, but they saw nothing more ; and Mr. Asterias returning, told them, with accents of great disappointment, that he had had a glimpse of a mermaid, but she had



'Mr. Asterias perlustrated the sea-coast for several days, and reaped disappointment, but not despair.'



eluded him in the darkness, and was gone, he presumed, to sup with some enamoured triton, in a submarine grotto.

‘But, seriously, Mr. Asterias,’ said the Honourable Mr. Listless, ‘do you positively believe there are such things as mermaids?’

Mr. Asterias. Most assuredly; and tritons too.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. What! things that are half human and half fish?

Mr. Asterias. Precisely. They are the oran-outangs of the sea. But I am persuaded that there are also complete sea men, differing in no respect from us, but that they are stupid, and covered with scales; for, though our organisation seems to exclude us essentially from the class of amphibious animals, yet anatomists well know that the *foramen ovale* may remain open in an adult, and that respiration is, in that case, not necessary to life: and how can it be otherwise explained that the Indian divers, employed in the pearl fishery, pass whole hours under the water; and that the famous Swedish gardener of Troningholm lived a day and a half under the ice without being drowned? A nereid, or mermaid, was taken in the year 1403 in a Dutch lake, and was in every respect like a French woman, except that she did not speak. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, an English ship, a hundred and fifty leagues from land, in the Greenland seas, discovered a flotilla of sixty or seventy little skiffs, in each of which was a triton, or sea man: at the approach of the English vessel the whole of them, seized with simultaneous fear, disappeared, skiffs and all, under the water, as if they had been a human variety of the nautilus. The illustrious Don Feijoo has preserved an authentic and well-attested story of a young Spaniard, named Francis de la Vega, who, bathing with some of his friends in June 1674, suddenly dived under the sea and rose no more. His friends thought him drowned: they were plebeians and pious Catholics; but a philosopher might very legitimately have drawn the same conclusion.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. Nothing could be more logical.

Mr. Asterias. Five years afterwards, some fishermen near Cadiz found in their nets a triton, or sea man; they spoke to him in several languages——

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. They were very learned fishermen.

Mr. Hilary. They had the gift of tongues by especial favour of their brother fisherman, Saint Peter.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Is Saint Peter the tutelar saint of Cadiz? (*None of the company could answer this question, and Mr. Asterias proceeded.*)

They spoke to him in several languages, but he was as mute as a fish. They handed him over to some holy friars, who exorcised him; but the devil was mute too. After some days he pronounced the name Lierganes. A monk took him to that village. His mother and brothers recognised and embraced him; but he was as insensible to their caresses as any other fish would have been. He had some scales on his body, which dropped off by degrees; but his skin was as hard and rough as shagreen. He stayed at home nine years, without recovering his speech or his reason: he then disappeared again; and one of his old acquaintance, some years after, saw him pop his head out of the water near the coast of the Asturias. These facts were certified by his brothers, and by Don Gaspardo de la Riba Aguero, Knight of Saint James, who lived near Lierganes, and often had the pleasure of our triton's company to dinner.—Pliny mentions an embassy of the Olyssiponians to Tiberius, to give him intelligence of a triton which had been heard playing on its shell in a certain cave; with several other authenticated facts on the subject of tritons and nereids.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. You astonish me. I have been much on the sea-shore, in the season, but I do not think I ever saw a mermaid. (*He rang, and summoned Fatout, who made his appearance half-seas over.*) Fatout! did I ever see a mermaid?

Fatout. Mermaid! mer-r-m-m-aid! Ah! merry maid! Oui, monsieur! Yes, sir, very many. I vish dere vas von or two here in de kitchen—ma foi! Dey be all as melancholic as so many tombstone.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. I mean, Fatout, an odd kind of human fish.

Fatout. De odd fish! Ah, oui! I understand de phrase: ve have seen nothing else since ve left town—ma foi!

The Honourable Mr. Listless. You seem to have a cup too much, sir.

Fatout. Non, monsieur: de cup too little. De fen be

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very unwholesome, and I drink-a-de ponch vid Raven de butler, to keep out de bad air.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Fatout ! I insist on your being sober.

Fatout. Oui, monsieur ; I vil be as sober as de révérendissime père Jean. I should be ver glad of de merry maid ; but de butler be de odd fish, and he swim in de bowl de ponch. Ah ! ah ! I do recollect de lettle-a song :—‘ About fair maids, and about fair maids, and about my merry maids all.’ (*Fatout reeled out, singing.*)

The Honourable Mr. Listless. I am overwhelmed : I never saw the rascal in such a condition before. But will you allow me, Mr. Asterias, to inquire into the *cui bono* of all the pains and expense you have incurred to discover a mermaid ? The *cui bono*, sir, is the question I always take the liberty to ask when I see any one taking much trouble for any object. I am myself a sort of Signor Pococurante, and should like to know if there be any thing better or pleasanter, than the state of existing and doing nothing ?

Mr. Asterias. I have made many voyages, Mr. Listless, to remote and barren shores : I have travelled over desert and inhospitable lands : I have defied danger—I have endured fatigue—I have submitted to privation. In the midst of these I have experienced pleasures which I would not at any time have exchanged for that of existing and doing nothing. I have known many evils, but I have never known the worst of all, which, as it seems to me, are those which are comprehended in the inexhaustible varieties of *ennui* : spleen, chagrin, vapours, blue devils, time-killing, discontent, misanthropy, and all their interminable train of fretfulness, querulousness, suspicions, jealousies, and fears, which have alike infected society and the literature of society ; and which would make an arctic ocean of the human mind, if the more humane pursuits of philosophy and science did not keep alive the better feelings and more valuable energies of our nature.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. You are pleased to be severe upon our fashionable belles lettres.

Mr. Asterias. Surely not without reason, when pirates, highwaymen, and other varieties of the extensive genus Marauder, are the only *beau idéal* of the active, as splenetic and railing misanthropy is of the speculative energy. A

gloomy brow and a tragical voice seem to have been of late the characteristics of fashionable manners: and a morbid, withering, deadly, antisocial sirocco, loaded with moral and political despair, breathes through all the groves and valleys of the modern Parnassus; while science moves on in the calm dignity of its course, affording to youth delights equally pure and vivid—to maturity, calm and grateful occupation—to old age, the most pleasing recollections and inexhaustible materials of agreeable and salutary reflection; and, while its votary enjoys the disinterested pleasure of enlarging the intellect and increasing the comforts of society, he is himself independent of the caprices of human intercourse and the accidents of human fortune. Nature is his great and inexhaustible treasure. His days are always too short for his enjoyment: *ennui* is a stranger to his door. At peace with the world and with his own mind, he suffices to himself, makes all around him happy, and the close of his pleasing and beneficial existence is the evening of a beautiful day.¹

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Really, I should like very well to lead such a life myself, but the exertion would be too much for me. Besides, I have been at college. I contrive to get through my day by sinking the morning in bed, and killing the evening in company; dressing and dining in the intermediate space, and stopping the chinks and crevices of the few vacant moments that remain with a little easy reading. And that amiable discontent and antisociality which you reprobate in our present drawing-room-table literature, I find, I do assure you, a very fine mental tonic, which reconciles me to my favourite pursuit of doing nothing, by showing me that nobody is worth doing anything for.

Marionetta. But is there not in such compositions a kind of unconscious self-detection, which seems to carry their own antidote with them? For surely no one who cordially and truly either hates or despises the world will publish a volume every three months to say so.

Mr. Flosky. There is a secret in all this, which I will elucidate with a dusky remark. According to Berkeley, the *esse* of things is *percipi*. They exist as they are perceived. But, leaving for the present, as far as relates to the material

¹ See Denys Montfort: *Histoire Naturelle des Mollusques; Vues Générales*, pp. 37, 38.

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world, the materialists, hyloists, and antihyloists, to settle this point among them, which is indeed

A subtle question, raised among
Those out o' their wits, and those i' the wrong ;

for only we transcendentalists are in the right : we may very safely assert that the *esse* of happiness is *percipi*. It exists as it is perceived. 'It is the mind that maketh well or ill.' The elements of pleasure and pain are everywhere. The degree of happiness that any circumstances or objects can confer on us depends on the mental disposition with which we approach them. If you consider what is meant by the common phrases, a happy disposition and a discontented temper, you will perceive that the truth for which I am contending is universally admitted.

(Mr. Flosky suddenly stopped: he found himself unintentionally trespassing within the limits of common sense.)

Mr. Hilary. It is very true ; a happy disposition finds materials of enjoyment everywhere. In the city or the country—in society or in solitude—in the theatre or the forest—in the hum of the multitude or in the silence of the mountains, are alike materials of reflection and elements of pleasure. It is one mode of pleasure to listen to the music of 'Don Giovanni,' in a theatre glittering with light, and crowded with elegance and beauty : it is another to glide at sunset over the bosom of a lonely lake, where no sound disturbs the silence but the motion of the boat through the waters. A happy disposition derives pleasure from both, a discontented temper from neither, but is always busy in detecting deficiencies, and feeding dissatisfaction with comparisons. The one gathers all the flowers, the other all the nettles, in its path. The one has the faculty of enjoying everything, the other of enjoying nothing. The one realises all the pleasure of the present good ; the other converts it into pain, by pining after something better, which is only better because it is not present, and which, if it were present, would not be enjoyed. These morbid spirits are in life what professed critics are in literature ; they see nothing but faults, because they are predetermined to shut their eyes to beauties. The critic does his utmost to blight genius in its infancy ; that which rises in spite of him he will not see ; and then he complains of the decline of

literature. In like manner, these cankers of society complain of human nature and society, when they have wilfully debarred themselves from all the good they contain, and done their utmost to blight their own happiness and that of all around them. Misanthropy is sometimes the product of disappointed benevolence; but it is more frequently the offspring of overweening and mortified vanity, quarrelling with the world for not being better treated than it deserves.

Scythrop (to Marionetta). These remarks are rather uncharitable. There is great good in human nature, but it is at present ill-conditioned. Ardent spirits cannot but be dissatisfied with things as they are; and, according to their views of the probabilities of amelioration, they will rush into the extremes of either hope or despair—of which the first is enthusiasm, and the second misanthropy; but their sources in this case are the same, as the Severn and the Wye run in different directions, and both rise in Plinlimmon.

Marionetta. ‘And there is salmon in both’; for the resemblance is about as close as that between Macedon and Monmouth.

CHAPTER VIII

MARIONETTA observed the next day a remarkable perturbation in Scythrop, for which she could not imagine any probable cause. She was willing to believe at first that it had some transient and trifling source, and would pass off in a day or two; but, contrary to this expectation, it daily increased. She was well aware that Scythrop had a strong tendency to the love of mystery, for its own sake; that is to say, he would employ mystery to serve a purpose, but would first choose his purpose by its capability of mystery. He seemed now to have more mystery on his hands than the laws of the system allowed, and to wear his coat of darkness with an air of great discomfort. All her little playful arts lost by degrees much of their power either to irritate or to soothe; and the first perception of her diminished influence produced in her an immediate depression of spirits, and a consequent sadness of demeanour, that rendered her very interesting to Mr. Glowry; who, duly considering the improbability of accomplishing his wishes with respect to Miss Toobad (which improbability naturally increased in the diurnal ratio of that young lady's absence), began to reconcile himself by degrees to the idea of Marionetta being his daughter.

Marionetta made many ineffectual attempts to extract from Scythrop the secret of his mystery; and, in despair of drawing it from himself, began to form hopes that she might find a clue to it from Mr. Flosky, who was Scythrop's dearest friend, and was more frequently than any other person admitted to his solitary tower. Mr. Flosky, however, had ceased to be visible in a morning. He was engaged in the composition of a dismal ballad; and, Marionetta's uneasiness overcoming her scruples of decorum, she determined to seek him in the

apartment which he had chosen for his study. She tapped at the door, and at the sound 'Come in,' entered the apartment. It was noon, and the sun was shining in full splendour, much to the annoyance of Mr. Flosky, who had obviated the inconvenience by closing the shutters, and drawing the window-curtains. He was sitting at his table by the light of a solitary candle, with a pen in one hand, and a muffineer in the other, with which he occasionally sprinkled salt on the wick, to make it burn blue. He sate with 'his eye in a fine frenzy rolling,' and turned his inspired gaze on Marionetta as if she had been the ghostly ladie of a magical vision; then placed his hand before his eyes, with an appearance of manifest pain—shook his head—withdrew his hand—rubbed his eyes, like a waking man—and said, in a tone of ruefulness most jeremitylorically pathetic, 'To what am I to attribute this very unexpected pleasure, my dear Miss O'Carroll?'

Marionetta. I must apologise for intruding on you, Mr. Flosky; but the interest which I—you—take in my cousin Scythrop——

Mr. Flosky. Pardon me, Miss O'Carroll; I do not take any interest in any person or thing on the face of the earth; which sentiment, if you analyse it, you will find to be the quintessence of the most refined philanthropy.

Marionetta. I will take it for granted that it is so, Mr. Flosky; I am not conversant with metaphysical subtleties, but——

Mr. Flosky. Subtleties! my dear Miss O'Carroll. I am sorry to find you participating in the vulgar error of the *reading public*, to whom an unusual collocation of words, involving a juxtaposition of antiperistatistical ideas, immediately suggests the notion of hyperoxysophistical paradoxology.

Marionetta. Indeed, Mr. Flosky, it suggests no such notion to me. I have sought you for the purpose of obtaining information.

Mr. Flosky (*shaking his head*). No one ever sought me for such a purpose before.

Marionetta. I think, Mr. Flosky—that is, I believe—that is, I fancy—that is, I imagine——

Mr. Flosky. The *τουτεστι*, the *id est*, the *cioè*, the *c'est à dire*, the *that is*, my dear Miss O'Carroll, is not applicable in this case—if you will permit me to take the liberty of saying

so. Think is not synonymous with believe—for belief, in many most important particulars, results from the total absence, the absolute negation of thought, and is thereby the sane and orthodox condition of mind; and thought and belief are both essentially different from fancy, and fancy, again, is distinct from imagination. This distinction between fancy and imagination is one of the most abstruse and important points of metaphysics. I have written seven hundred pages of promise to elucidate it, which promise I shall keep as faithfully as the bank will its promise to pay.

Marionetta. I assure you, Mr. Flosky, I care no more about metaphysics than I do about the bank; and, if you will condescend to talk to a simple girl in intelligible terms——

Mr. Flosky. Say not condescend! Know you not that you talk to the most humble of men, to one who has buckled on the armour of sanctity, and clothed himself with humility as with a garment?

Marionetta. My cousin Scythrop has of late had an air of mystery about him, which gives me great uneasiness.

Mr. Flosky. That is strange: nothing is so becoming to a man as an air of mystery. Mystery is the very keystone of all that is beautiful in poetry, all that is sacred in faith, and all that is recondite in transcendental psychology. I am writing a ballad which is all mystery; it is 'such stuff as dreams are made of,' and is, indeed, stuff made of a dream; for last night I fell asleep as usual over my book, and had a vision of pure reason. I composed five hundred lines in my sleep; so that, having had a dream of a ballad, I am now officiating as my own Peter Quince, and making a ballad of my dream, and it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it has no bottom.

Marionetta. I see, Mr. Flosky, you think my intrusion unseasonable, and are inclined to punish it, by talking nonsense to me. (*Mr. Flosky gave a start at the word nonsense, which almost overturned the table.*) I assure you, I would not have intruded if I had not been very much interested in the question I wished to ask you.—(*Mr. Flosky listened in sullen dignity.*)—My cousin Scythrop seems to have some secret preying on his mind.—(*Mr. Flosky was silent.*)—He seems very unhappy—Mr. Flosky.—Perhaps you are acquainted with the cause.—(*Mr. Flosky was still silent.*)—I only wish

to know — Mr. Flosky — if it is anything — that could be remedied by anything — that any one — of whom I know anything — could do.

Mr. Flosky (after a pause). There are various ways of getting at secrets. The most approved methods, as recommended both theoretically and practically in philosophical novels, are eaves-dropping at key-holes, picking the locks of chests and desks, peeping into letters, steaming wafers, and insinuating hot wire under sealing wax ; none of which methods I hold it lawful to practise.

Marionetta. Surely, Mr. Flosky, you cannot suspect me of wishing to adopt or encourage such base and contemptible arts.

Mr. Flosky. Yet are they recommended, and with well-strung reasons, by writers of gravity and note, as simple and easy methods of studying character, and gratifying that laudable curiosity which aims at the knowledge of man.

Marionetta. I am as ignorant of this morality which you do not approve, as of the metaphysics which you do : I should be glad to know, by your means, what is the matter with my cousin ; I do not like to see him unhappy, and I suppose there is some reason for it.

Mr. Flosky. Now I should rather suppose there is no reason for it : it is the fashion to be unhappy. To have a reason for being so would be exceedingly commonplace : to be so without any is the province of genius : the art of being miserable for misery's sake has been brought to great perfection in our days ; and the ancient Odyssey, which held forth a shining example of the endurance of real misfortune, will give place to a modern one, setting out a more instructive picture of querulous impatience under imaginary evils.

Marionetta. Will you oblige me, Mr. Flosky, by giving me a plain answer to a plain question ?

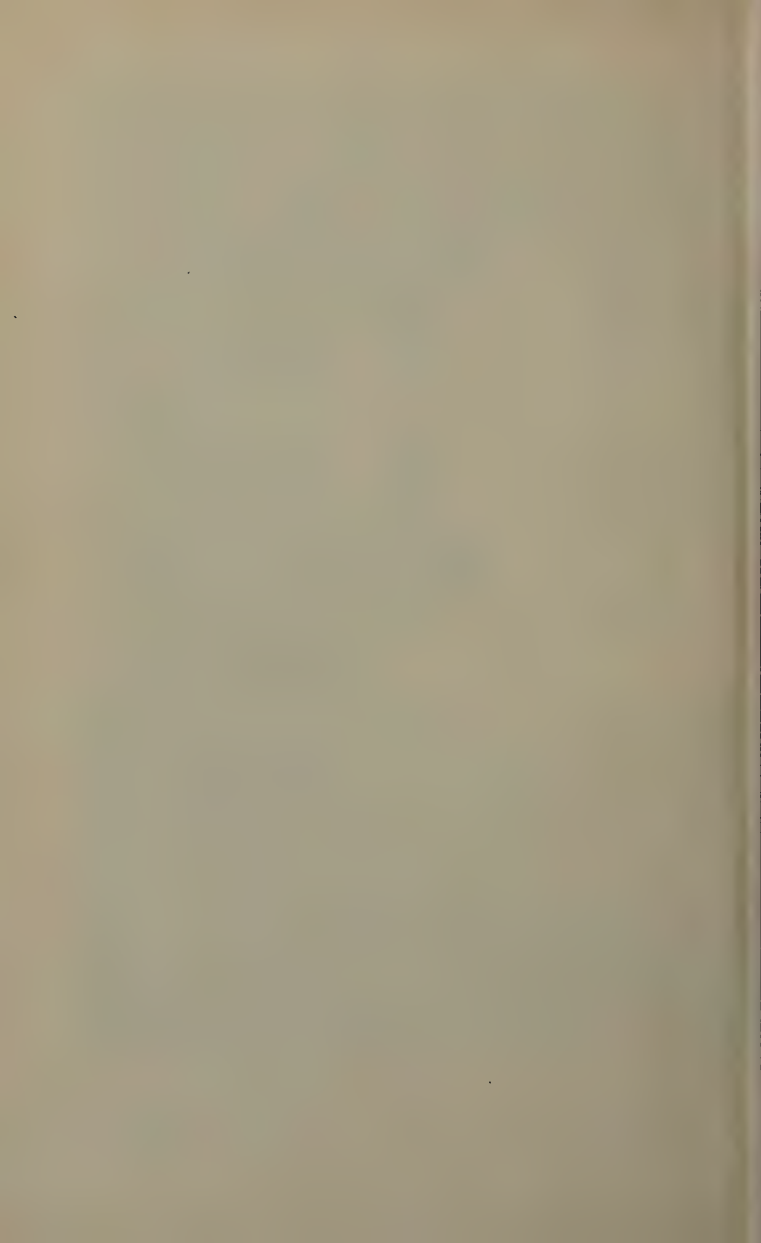
Mr. Flosky. It is impossible, my dear Miss O'Carroll. I never gave a plain answer to a question in my life.

Marionetta. Do you, or do you not, know what is the matter with my cousin ?

Mr. Flosky.—To say that I do not know, would be to say that I am ignorant of something ; and God forbid that a transcendental metaphysician, who has pure anticipated cognitions of everything, and carries the whole science of geometry



'Will you oblige me, Mr. Flosky, by giving me a plain answer to a plain question?'



in his head without ever having looked into Euclid, should fall into so empirical an error as to declare himself ignorant of anything: to say that I do know, would be to pretend to positive and circumstantial knowledge touching present matter of fact, which, when you consider the nature of evidence, and the various lights in which the same thing may be seen——

Marionetta. I see, Mr. Flosky, that either you have no information, or are determined not to impart it; and I beg your pardon for having given you this unnecessary trouble.

Mr. Flosky. My dear Miss O'Carroll, it would have given me great pleasure to have said anything that would have given you pleasure; but if any person living could make report of having obtained any information on any subject from Ferdinando Flosky, my transcendental reputation would be ruined for ever.

CHAPTER IX

SCYTHROP grew every day more reserved, mysterious, and *distrain*; and gradually lengthened the duration of his diurnal seclusions in his tower. Marionetta thought she perceived in all this very manifest symptoms of a warm love cooling.

It was seldom that she found herself alone with him in the morning, and, on these occasions, if she was silent in the hope of his speaking first, not a syllable would he utter; if she spoke to him indirectly, he assented monosyllabically; if she questioned him, his answers were brief, constrained, and evasive. Still, though her spirits were depressed, her playfulness had not so totally forsaken her, but that it illuminated at intervals the gloom of Nightmare Abbey; and if, on any occasion, she observed in Scythrop tokens of unextinguished or returning passion, her love of tormenting her lover immediately got the better both of her grief and her sympathy, though not of her curiosity, which Scythrop seemed determined not to satisfy. This playfulness, however, was in a great measure artificial, and usually vanished with the irritable Strephon, to whose annoyance it had been exerted. The Genius Loci, the *tutela* of Nightmare Abbey, the spirit of black melancholy, began to set his seal on her pallescent countenance. Scythrop perceived the change, found his tender sympathies awakened, and did his utmost to comfort the afflicted damsel, assuring her that his seeming inattention had only proceeded from his being involved in a profound meditation on a very hopeful scheme for the regeneration of human society. Marionetta called him ungrateful, cruel, cold-hearted, and accompanied her reproaches with many sobs and tears: poor Scythrop growing every moment more soft and submissive—till, at length, he threw himself at her feet, and declared that no

competition of beauty however dazzling, genius however transcendent, talents however cultivated, or philosophy however enlightened, should ever make him renounce his divine Marionetta.

‘Competition!’ thought Marionetta, and suddenly, with an air of the most freezing indifference, she said, ‘You are perfectly at liberty, sir, to do as you please; I beg you will follow your own plans without any reference to me.’

Scythrop was confounded. What was become of all her passion and her tears? Still kneeling, he kissed her hand with rueful timidity, and said, in most pathetic accents, ‘Do you not love me, Marionetta?’

‘No,’ said Marionetta, with a look of cold composure: ‘No.’ Scythrop still looked up incredulously. ‘No, I tell you.’

‘Oh! very well, madam,’ said Scythrop, rising, ‘if that is the case, there are those in the world——’

‘To be sure there are, sir;—and do you suppose I do not see through your designs, you ungenerous monster?’

‘My designs? Marionetta!’

‘Yes, your designs, Scythrop. You have come here to cast me off, and artfully contrive that it should appear to be my doing, and not yours, thinking to quiet your tender conscience with this pitiful stratagem. But do not suppose that you are of so much consequence to me: do not suppose it; you are of no consequence to me at all—none at all; therefore, leave me: I renounce you: leave me; why do you not leave me?’

Scythrop endeavoured to remonstrate, but without success. She reiterated her injunctions to him to leave her, till, in the simplicity of his spirit, he was preparing to comply. When he had nearly reached the door, Marionetta said, ‘Farewell.’ Scythrop looked back. ‘Farewell, Scythrop,’ she repeated, ‘you will never see me again.’

‘Never see you again, Marionetta?’

‘I shall go from hence to-morrow, perhaps to-day; and before we meet again, one of us will be married, and we might as well be dead, you know, Scythrop.’

The sudden change of her voice in the last few words, and the burst of tears that accompanied them, acted like electricity on the tender-hearted youth; and, in another instant, a com-

plete reconciliation was accomplished without the intervention of words.

There are, indeed, some learned casuists, who maintain that love has no language, and that all the misunderstandings and dissensions of lovers arise from the fatal habit of employing words on a subject to which words are inapplicable ; that love, beginning with looks, that is to say, with the physiognomical expression of congenial mental dispositions, tends through a regular gradation of signs and symbols of affection to that consummation which is most devoutly to be wished ; and that it neither is necessary that there should be, nor probable that there would be, a single word spoken from first to last between two sympathetic spirits, were it not that the arbitrary institutions of society have raised, at every step of this very simple process, so many complicated impediments and barriers in the shape of settlements and ceremonies, parents and guardians, lawyers, Jew-brokers, and parsons, that many an adventurous knight (who, in order to obtain the conquest of the Hesperian fruit, is obliged to fight his way through all these monsters) is either repulsed at the onset, or vanquished before the achievement of his enterprise : and such a quantity of unnatural talking is rendered inevitably necessary through all the stages of the progression, that the tender and volatile spirit of love often takes flight on the pinions of some of the *επεα πτερόεντα*, or *winged words*, which are pressed into his service in despite of himself.

At this conjuncture, Mr. Glowry entered, and sitting down near them, said, ‘I see how it is ; and, as we are all sure to be miserable do what we may, there is no need of taking pains to make one another more so ; therefore, with God’s blessing and mine, there’—joining their hands as he spoke.

Scythrop was not exactly prepared for this decisive step ; but he could only stammer out, ‘Really, sir, you are too good’ ; and Mr. Glowry departed to bring Mr. Hilary to ratify the act.

Now, whatever truth there may be in the theory of love and language, of which we have so recently spoken, certain it is, that during Mr. Glowry’s absence, which lasted half an hour, not a single word was said by either Scythrop or Marionetta.

Mr. Glowry returned with Mr. Hilary, who was delighted at the prospect of so advantageous an establishment for his orphan niece, of whom he considered himself in some manner

the guardian, and nothing remained, as Mr. Glowry observed, but to fix the day.

Marionetta blushed, and was silent. Scythrop was also silent for a time, and at length hesitatingly said, 'My dear sir, your goodness overpowers me; but really you are so precipitate.'

Now, this remark, if the young lady had made it, would whether she thought it or not—for sincerity is a thing of no account on these occasions, nor indeed on any other, according to Mr. Flosky—this remark, if the young lady had made it, would have been perfectly *comme il faut*; but being made by the young gentleman, it was *toute autre chose*, and was, indeed, in the eyes of his mistress, a most heinous and irremissible offence. Marionetta was angry, very angry, but she concealed her anger, and said, calmly and coldly, 'Certainly, you are much too precipitate, Mr. Glowry. I assure you, sir, I have by no means made up my mind; and, indeed, as far as I know it, it inclines the other way; but it will be quite time enough to think of these matters seven years hence.' Before surprise permitted reply, the young lady had locked herself up in her own apartment.

'Why, Scythrop,' said Mr. Glowry, elongating his face exceedingly, 'the devil is come among us sure enough, as Mr. Toobad observes: I thought you and Marionetta were both of a mind.'

'So we are, I believe, sir,' said Scythrop, gloomily, and stalked away to his tower.

'Mr. Glowry,' said Mr. Hilary, 'I do not very well understand all this.'

'Whims, brother Hilary,' said Mr. Glowry; 'some little foolish love quarrel, nothing more. Whims, freaks, April showers. They will be blown over by to-morrow.'

'If not,' said Mr. Hilary, 'these April showers have made us April fools.'

'Ah!' said Mr. Glowry, 'you are a happy man, and in all your afflictions you can console yourself with a joke, let it be ever so bad, provided you crack it yourself. I should be very happy to laugh with you, if it would give you any satisfaction; but, really, at present, my heart is so sad, that I find it impossible to levy a contribution on my muscles.'

CHAPTER X

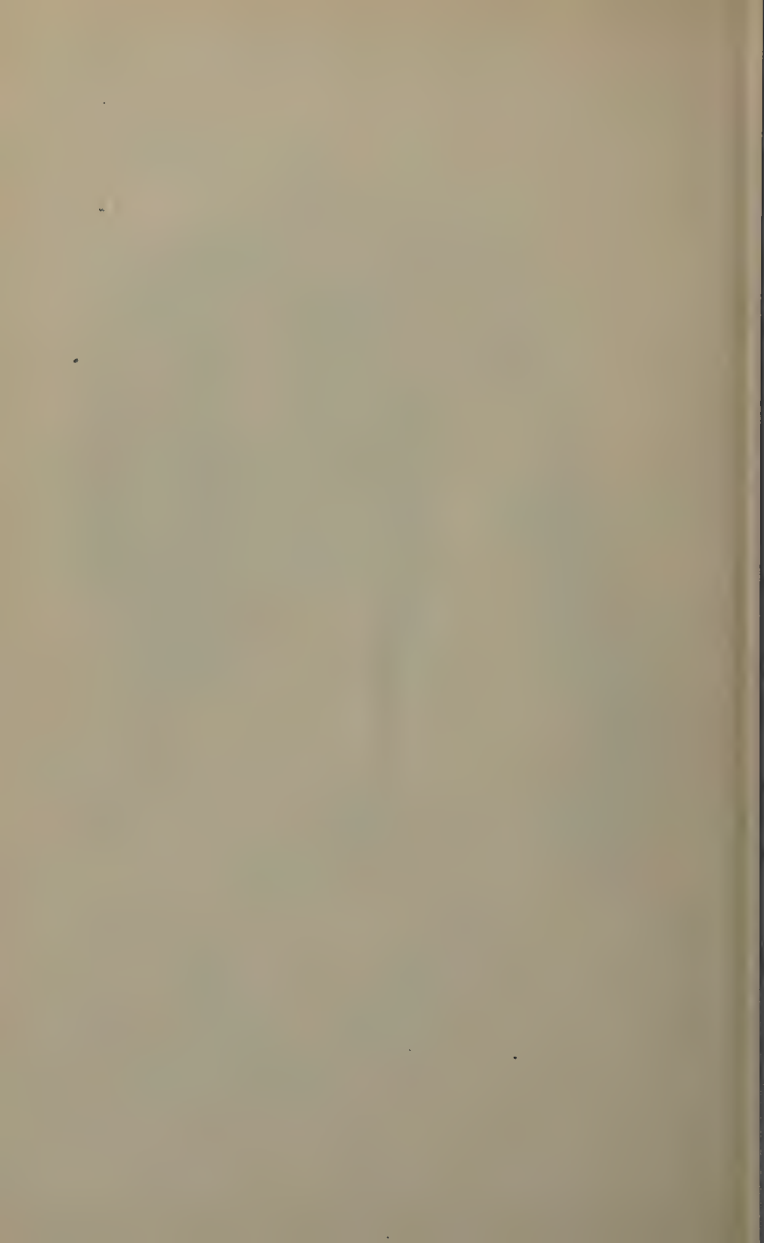
ON the evening on which Mr. Asterias had caught a glimpse of a female figure on the sea-shore, which he had translated into the visual sign of his interior cognition of a mermaid, Scythrop, retiring to his tower, found his study preoccupied. A stranger, muffled in a cloak, was sitting at his table. Scythrop paused in surprise. The stranger rose at his entrance, and looked at him intently a few minutes, in silence. The eyes of the stranger alone were visible. All the rest of the figure was muffled and mantled in the folds of a black cloak, which was raised, by the right hand, to the level of the eyes. This scrutiny being completed, the stranger, dropping the cloak, said, 'I see, by your physiognomy, that you may be trusted'; and revealed to the astonished Scythrop a female form and countenance of dazzling grace and beauty, with long flowing hair of raven blackness, and large black eyes of almost oppressive brilliancy, which strikingly contrasted with a complexion of snowy whiteness. Her dress was extremely elegant, but had an appearance of foreign fashion, as if both the lady and her mantuamaker were of 'a far countree.'

I guess 'twas frightful there to see
A lady richly clad as she,
Beautiful exceedingly.

For, if it be terrible to one young lady to find another under a tree at midnight, it must, *a fortiori*, be much more terrible to a young gentleman to find a young lady in his study at that hour. If the logical consecutiveness of this conclusion be not manifest to my readers, I am sorry for their dulness, and must refer them, for more ample elucidation, to a treatise which Mr. Flosky intends to write, on the Categories of Relation, which comprehend Substance and Accident, Cause and Effect, Action and Reaction.



'The stranger rose at his entrance, and looked at him intently a few minutes, in silence.'



Scythrop, therefore, either was or ought to have been frightened ; at all events, he was astonished ; and astonishment, though not in itself fear, is nevertheless a good stage towards it, and is, indeed, as it were, the half-way house between respect and terror, according to Mr. Burke's graduated scale of the sublime.¹

'You are surprised,' said the lady ; 'yet why should you be surprised ? If you had met me in a drawing-room, and I had been introduced to you by an old woman, it would have been a matter of course ; can the division of two or three walls, and the absence of an unimportant personage, make the same object essentially different in the perception of a philosopher ?'

'Certainly not,' said Scythrop ; 'but when any class of objects has habitually presented itself to our perceptions in invariable conjunction with particular relations, then, on the sudden appearance of one object of the class divested of those accompaniments, the essential difference of the relation is, by an involuntary process, transferred to the object itself, which thus offers itself to our perceptions with all the strangeness of novelty.'

'You are a philosopher,' said the lady, 'and a lover of liberty. You are the author of a treatise, called "Philosophical Gas ; or, a Project for a General Illumination of the Human Mind."'

'I am,' said Scythrop, delighted at the first blossom of his renown.

¹ There must be some mistake in this, for the whole honourable band of gentlemen pensioners has resolved unanimously that Mr. Burke was a very sublime person, particularly after he had prostituted his own soul, and betrayed his country and mankind, for £1200 a year : yet he does not appear to have been a very terrible personage, and certainly went off with a very small portion of human respect, though he contrived to excite, in a great degree, the astonishment of all honest men. Our immaculate laureate (who gives us to understand that, if he had not been purified by holy matrimony into a mystical type, he would have died a virgin) is another sublime gentleman of the same genus : he very much astonished some persons when he sold his birthright for a pot of sack ; but not even his *Sosia* has a grain of respect for him, though, doubtless, he thinks his name very terrible to the enemy, when he flourishes his critico-poeticopolitical tomahawk, and sets up his Indian yell for the blood of his old friends : but, at best, he is a mere political scarecrow, a man of straw, ridiculous to all who know of what materials he is made ; and to none more so, than to those who have stuffed him, and set him up, as the Priapus of the garden of the golden apples of corruption.

‘I am a stranger in this country,’ said the lady; ‘I have been but a few days in it, yet I find myself immediately under the necessity of seeking refuge from an atrocious persecution. I had no friend to whom I could apply; and, in the midst of my difficulties, accident threw your pamphlet in my way. I saw that I had, at least, one kindred mind in this nation, and determined to apply to you.’

‘And what would you have me do?’ said Scythrop, more and more amazed, and not a little perplexed.

‘I would have you,’ said the young lady, ‘assist me in finding some place of retreat, where I can remain concealed from the indefatigable search that is being made for me. I have been so nearly caught once or twice already, that I cannot confide any longer in my own ingenuity.’

Doubtless, thought Scythrop, this is one of my golden candlesticks. ‘I have constructed,’ said he, ‘in this tower, an entrance to a small suite of unknown apartments in the main building, which I defy any creature living to detect. If you would like to remain there a day or two, till I can find you a more suitable concealment, you may rely on the honour of a transcendental eleutherarch.’

‘I rely on myself,’ said the lady. ‘I act as I please, go where I please, and let the world say what it will. I am rich enough to set it at defiance. It is the tyrant of the poor and the feeble, but the slave of those who are above the reach of its injury.’

Scythrop ventured to inquire the name of his fair *protégée*. ‘What is a name?’ said the lady: ‘any name will serve the purpose of distinction. Call me Stella. I see by your looks,’ she added, ‘that you think all this very strange. When you know me better, your surprise will cease. I submit not to be an accomplice in my sex’s slavery. I am, like yourself, a lover of freedom, and I carry my theory into practice. *They alone are subject to blind authority who have no reliance on their own strength.*’

Stella took possession of the recondite apartments. Scythrop intended to find her another asylum; but from day to day he postponed his intention, and by degrees forgot it. The young lady reminded him of it from day to day, till she also forgot it. Scythrop was anxious to learn her history; but she would add nothing to what she had already communicated,

that she was shunning an atrocious persecution. Scythrop thought of Lord C. and the Alien Act, and said, 'As you will not tell your name, I suppose it is in the green bag.' Stella, not understanding what he meant, was silent; and Scythrop, translating silence into acquiescence, concluded that he was sheltering an *illuminée* whom Lord S. suspected of an intention to take the Tower, and set fire to the Bank: exploits at least as likely to be accomplished by the hands and eyes of a young beauty, as by a drunken cobbler and doctor, armed with a pamphlet and an old stocking.

Stella, in her conversations with Scythrop, displayed a highly-cultivated and energetic mind, full of impassioned schemes of liberty, and impatience of masculine usurpation. She had a lively sense of all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and the vivid pictures which her imagination presented to her of the numberless scenes of injustice and misery which are being acted at every moment in every part of the inhabited world, gave an habitual seriousness to her physiognomy, that made it seem as if a smile had never once hovered on her lips. She was intimately conversant with the German language and literature; and Scythrop listened with delight to her repetitions of her favourite passages from Schiller and Goethe, and to her encomiums on the sublime Spartacus Weishaupt, the immortal founder of the sect of the Illuminati. Scythrop found that his soul had a greater capacity of love than the image of Marionetta had filled. The form of Stella took possession of every vacant corner of the cavity, and by degrees displaced that of Marionetta from many of the outworks of the citadel; though the latter still held possession of the *keef*. He judged, from his new friend calling herself Stella, that, if it were not her real name, she was an admirer of the principles of the German play from which she had taken it, and took an opportunity of leading the conversation to that subject; but to his great surprise, the lady spoke very ardently of the singleness and exclusiveness of love, and declared that the reign of affection was one and indivisible; that it might be transferred, but could not be participated. 'If I ever love,' said she, 'I shall do so without limit or restriction. I shall hold all difficulties light, all sacrifices cheap, all obstacles gossamer. But for love so total, I shall claim a return as absolute. I will have no rival: whether more or less favoured

will be of little moment. I will be neither first nor second—I will be alone. The heart which I shall possess I will possess entirely, or entirely renounce.'

Scythrop did not dare to mention the name of Marionetta ; he trembled lest some unlucky accident should reveal it to Stella, though he scarcely knew what result to wish or anticipate, and lived in the double fever of a perpetual dilemma. He could not dissemble to himself that he was in love, at the same time, with two damsels of minds and habits as remote as the antipodes. The scale of predilection always inclined to the fair one who happened to be present ; but the absent was never effectually outweighed, though the degrees of exaltation and depression varied according to accidental variations in the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual graces of his respective charmers. Passing and repassing several times a day from the company of the one to that of the other, he was like a shuttlecock between two battledores, changing its direction as rapidly as the oscillations of a pendulum, receiving many a hard knock on the cork of a sensitive heart, and flying from point to point on the feathers of a supersublimated head. This was an awful state of things. He had now as much mystery about him as any romantic transcendentalist or transcendental romancer could desire. He had his esoterical and his exoterical love. He could not endure the thought of losing either of them, but he trembled when he imagined the possibility that some fatal discovery might deprive him of both. The old proverb concerning two strings to a bow gave him some gleams of comfort ; but that concerning two stools occurred to him more frequently, and covered his forehead with a cold perspiration. With Stella, he could indulge freely in all his romantic and philosophical visions. He could build castles in the air, and she would pile towers and turrets on the imaginary edifices. With Marionetta it was otherwise : she knew nothing of the world and society beyond the sphere of her own experience. Her life was all music and sunshine, and she wondered what any one could see to complain of in such a pleasant state of things. She loved Scythrop, she hardly knew why ; indeed she was not always sure that she loved him at all : she felt her fondness increase or diminish in an inverse ratio to his. When she had manœuvred him into a fever of passionate love, she often felt and always assumed indifference ;

if she found that her coldness was contagious, and that Scythrop either was, or pretended to be, as indifferent as herself, she would become doubly kind, and raise him again to that elevation from which she had previously thrown him down. Thus, when his love was flowing, hers was ebbing : when his was ebbing, hers was flowing. Now and then there were moments of level tide, when reciprocal affection seemed to promise imperturbable harmony ; but Scythrop could scarcely resign his spirit to the pleasing illusion, before the pinnacle of the lover's affections was caught in some eddy of the lady's caprice, and he was whirled away from the shore of his hopes, without rudder or compass, into an ocean of mists and storms. It resulted from this system of conduct, that all that passed between Scythrop and Marionetta consisted in making and un-making love. He had no opportunity to take measure of her understanding by conversations on general subjects, and on his favourite designs ; and, being left in this respect to the exercise of indefinite conjecture, he took it for granted, as most lovers would do in similar circumstances, that she had great natural talents, which she wasted at present on trifles : but coquetry would end with marriage, and leave room for philosophy to exert its influence on her mind. Stella had no coquetry, no disguise : she was an enthusiast in subjects of general interest ; and her conduct to Scythrop was always uniform, or rather showed a regular progression of partiality which seemed fast ripening into love.

CHAPTER XI

SCYTHROP, attending one day the summons to dinner, found in the drawing-room his friend Mr. Cypress the poet, whom he had known at college; and who was a great favourite of Mr. Glowry. Mr. Cypress said he was on the point of leaving England, but could not think of doing so without a farewell look at Nightmare Abbey and his respected friends, the moody Mr. Glowry and the mysterious Mr. Scythrop, the sublime Mr. Flosky and the pathetic Mr. Listless; to all of whom, and the morbid hospitality of the melancholy dwelling in which they were then assembled, he assured them he should always look back with as much affection as his lacerated spirit could feel for anything. The sympathetic condolence of their respective replies was cut short by Raven's announcement of 'dinner on table.'

The conversation that took place when the wine was in circulation, and the ladies were withdrawn, we shall report with our usual scrupulous fidelity.

Mr. Glowry. You are leaving England, Mr. Cypress. There is a delightful melancholy in saying farewell to an old acquaintance, when the chances are twenty to one against ever meeting again. A smiling bumper to a sad parting, and let us all be unhappy together.

Mr. Cypress (filling a bumper). This is the only social habit that the disappointed spirit never unlearns.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx (filling). It is the only piece of academical learning that the finished educatee retains.

Mr. Flosky (filling). It is the only objective fact which the sceptic can realise.

Scythrop (filling). It is the only styptic for a bleeding heart.

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The Honourable Mr. Listless (filling). It is the only trouble that is very well worth taking.

Mr. Asterias (filling). It is the only key of conversational truth.

Mr. Toobad (filling). It is the only antidote to the great wrath of the devil.

Mr. Hilary (filling). It is the only symbol of perfect life. The inscription 'HIC NON BIBITUR' will suit nothing but a tombstone.

Mr. Glowry. You will see many fine old ruins, Mr. Cypress; crumbling pillars, and mossy walls—many a one-legged Venus and headless Minerva—many a Neptune buried in sand—many a Jupiter turned topsy-turvy—many a perforated Bacchus doing duty as a water-pipe—many reminiscences of the ancient world, which I hope was better worth living in than the modern; though, for myself, I care not a straw more for one than the other, and would not go twenty miles to see anything that either could show.

Mr. Cypress. It is something to seek, Mr. Glowry. The mind is restless, and must persist in seeking, though to find is to be disappointed. Do you feel no aspirations towards the countries of Socrates and Cicero? No wish to wander among the venerable remains of the greatness that has passed for ever?

Mr. Glowry. Not a grain.

Scythrop. It is, indeed, much the same as if a lover should dig up the buried form of his mistress, and gaze upon relics which are anything but herself, to wander among a few mouldy ruins, that are only imperfect indexes to lost volumes of glory, and meet at every step the more melancholy ruins of human nature—a degenerate race of stupid and shrivelled slaves, grovelling in the lowest depths of servility and superstition.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. It is the fashion to go abroad. I have thought of it myself, but am hardly equal to the exertion. To be sure, a little eccentricity and originality are allowable in some cases; and the most eccentric and original of all characters is an Englishman who stays at home.

Scythrop. I should have no pleasure in visiting countries that are past all hope of regeneration. There is great hope of our own; and it seems to me that an Englishman, who, either

by his station in society, or by his genius, or (as in your instance, Mr. Cypress) by both, has the power of essentially serving his country in its arduous struggle with its domestic enemies, yet forsakes his country, which is still so rich in hope, to dwell in others which are only fertile in the ruins of memory, does what none of those ancients, whose fragmentary memorials you venerate, would have done in similar circumstances.

Mr. Cypress. Sir, I have quarrelled with my wife ; and a man who has quarrelled with his wife is absolved from all duty to his country. I have written an ode to tell the people as much, and they may take it as they list.

Scythrop. Do you suppose, if Brutus had quarrelled with his wife, he would have given it as a reason to Cassius for having nothing to do with his enterprise ? Or would Cassius have been satisfied with such an excuse ?

Mr. Flosky. Brutus was a senator ; so is our dear friend : but the cases are different. Brutus had some hope of political good : Mr. Cypress has none. How should he, after what we have seen in France ?

Scythrop. A Frenchman is born in harness, ready saddled, bitted, and bridled, for any tyrant to ride. He will fawn under his rider one moment, and throw him and kick him to death the next ; but another adventurer springs on his back, and by dint of whip and spur on he goes as before. We may, without much vanity, hope better of ourselves.

Mr. Cypress. I have no hope for myself or for others. Our life is a false nature ; it is not in the harmony of things ; it is an all-blasting upas, whose root is earth, and whose leaves are the skies which rain their poison-dews upon mankind. We wither from our youth ; we gasp with unslaked thirst for unattainable good ; lured from the first to the last by phantoms—love, fame, ambition, avarice—all idle, and all ill—one meteor of many names, that vanishes in the smoke of death.¹

Mr. Flosky. A most delightful speech, Mr. Cypress. A most amiable and instructive philosophy. You have only to impress its truth on the minds of all living men, and life will then, indeed, be the desert and the solitude ; and I must do you, myself, and our mutual friends, the justice to observe, that let society only give fair play at one and the same time, as I flatter myself it is inclined to do, to your system of morals, and

¹ *Childe Harold*, canto 4, cxxiv. cxxvi.

my system of metaphysics, and Scythrop's system of politics, and Mr. Listless's system of manners, and Mr. Toobad's system of religion, and the result will be as fine a mental chaos as even the immortal Kant himself could ever have hoped to see ; in the prospect of which I rejoice.

Mr. Hilary. 'Certainly, ancient, it is not a thing to rejoice at': I am one of those who cannot see the good that is to result from all this mystifying and blue-devilling of society. The contrast it presents to the cheerful and solid wisdom of antiquity is too forcible not to strike any one who has the least knowledge of classical literature. To represent vice and misery as the necessary accompaniments of genius, is as mischievous as it is false, and the feeling is as unclassical as the language in which it is usually expressed.

Mr. Toobad. It is our calamity. The devil has come among us, and has begun by taking possession of all the cleverest fellows. Yet, forsooth, this is the enlightened age. Marry, how? Did our ancestors go peeping about with dark lanterns, and do we walk at our ease in broad sunshine? Where is the manifestation of our light? By what symptoms do you recognise it? What are its signs, its tokens, its symptoms, its symbols, its categories, its conditions? What is it, and why? How, where, when is it to be seen, felt, and understood? What do we see by it which our ancestors saw not, and which at the same time is worth seeing? We see a hundred men hanged, where they saw one. We see five hundred transported, where they saw one. We see five thousand in the workhouse, where they saw one. We see scores of Bible Societies, where they saw none. We see paper, where they saw gold. We see men in stays, where they saw men in armour. We see painted faces, where they saw healthy ones. We see children perishing in manufactories, where they saw them flourishing in the fields. We see prisons, where they saw castles. We see masters, where they saw representatives. In short, they saw true men, where we see false knaves. They saw Milton, and we see Mr. Sackbut.

Mr. Flosky. The false knave, sir, is my honest friend ; therefore, I beseech you, let him be countenanced. God forbid but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request.

Mr. Toobad. 'Good men and true,' was their common term, like the *καλὸς κἀγαθὸς* of the Athenians. It is so long

since men have been either good or true, that it is to be questioned which is most obsolete, the fact or the phraseology.

Mr. Cypress. There is no worth nor beauty but in the mind's idea. Love sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind.¹ Confusion, thrice confounded, is the portion of him who rests even for an instant on that most brittle of reeds—the affection of a human being. The sum of our social destiny is to inflict or to endure.²

Mr. Hilary. Rather to bear and forbear, Mr. Cypress—a maxim which you perhaps despise. Ideal beauty is not the mind's creation: it is real beauty, refined and purified in the mind's alembic, from the alloy which always more or less accompanies it in our mixed and imperfect nature. But still the gold exists in a very ample degree. To expect too much is a disease in the expectant, for which human nature is not responsible; and, in the common name of humanity, I protest against these false and mischievous ravings. To rail against humanity for not being abstract perfection, and against human love for not realising all the splendid visions of the poets of chivalry, is to rail at the summer for not being all sunshine, and at the rose for not being always in bloom.

Mr. Cypress. Human love! Love is not an inhabitant of the earth. We worship him as the Athenians did their unknown God: but broken hearts are the martyrs of his faith, and the eye shall never see the form which phantasy paints, and which passion pursues through paths of delusive beauty, among flowers whose odours are agonies, and trees whose gums are poison.³

Mr. Hilary. You talk like a Rosicrucian, who will love nothing but a sylph, who does not believe in the existence of a sylph, and who yet quarrels with the whole universe for not containing a sylph.

Mr. Cypress. The mind is diseased of its own beauty, and fevers into false creation. The forms which the sculptor's soul has seized exist only in himself.⁴

Mr. Flosky. Permit me to discept. They are the mediums of common forms combined and arranged into a common standard. The ideal beauty of the Helen of Zeuxis was the combined medium of the real beauty of the virgins of Crotona.

¹ *Childe Harold*, canto 4, cxxiii.

³ *Ibid.* canto 4, cxxi, cxxxvi.

² *Ibid.* canto 3, lxxi.

⁴ *Ibid.* canto 4, cxxii.

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Mr. Hilary. But to make ideal beauty the shadow in the water, and, like the dog in the fable, to throw away the substance in catching at the shadow, is scarcely the characteristic of wisdom, whatever it may be of genius. To reconcile man as he is to the world as it is, to preserve and improve all that is good, and destroy or alleviate all that is evil, in physical and moral nature—have been the hope and aim of the greatest teachers and ornaments of our species. I will say, too, that the highest wisdom and the highest genius have been invariably accompanied with cheerfulness. We have sufficient proofs on record that Shakspeare and Socrates were the most festive of companions. But now the little wisdom and genius we have seem to be entering into a conspiracy against cheerfulness.

Mr. Toobad. How can we be cheerful with the devil among us?

The Honourable Mr. Listless. How can we be cheerful when our nerves are shattered?

Mr. Flosky. How can we be cheerful when we are surrounded by a *reading public*, that is growing too wise for its betters?

Scythrop. How can we be cheerful when our great general designs are crossed every moment by our little particular passions?

Mr. Cypress. How can we be cheerful in the midst of disappointment and despair?

Mr. Glowry. Let us all be unhappy together.

Mr. Hilary. Let us sing a catch.

Mr. Glowry. No: a nice tragical ballad. The Norfolk Tragedy to the tune of the Hundredth Psalm.

Mr. Hilary. I say a catch.

Mr. Glowry. I say no. A song from Mr. Cypress.

All. A song from Mr. Cypress.

Mr. Cypress sang—

There is a fever of the spirit,
The brand of Cain's unresting doom,
Which in the lone dark souls that bear it
Glows like the lamp in Tullia's tomb:
Unlike that lamp, its subtle fire
Burns, blasts, consumes its cell, the heart,
Till, one by one, hope, joy, desire,
Like dreams of shadowy smoke depart.

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When hope, love, life itself, are only
Dust—spectral memories—dead and cold—
The unfed fire burns bright and lonely,
Like that undying lamp of old :
And by that drear illumination,
Till time its clay-built home has rent,
Thought broods on feeling's desolation—
The soul is its own monument.

Mr. Glowry. Admirable. Let us all be unhappy together.

Mr. Hilary. Now, I say again, a catch.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. I am for you.

Mr. Hilary. 'Seamen three.'

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. Agreed. I'll be Harry Gill,
with the voice of three. Begin.

Mr. Hilary and the Reverend Mr. Larynx.—

Seamen three ! What men be ye ?
Gotham's three wise men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free ?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine ;
And your ballast is old wine.

Who art thou, so fast adrift ?
I am he they call Old Care.
Here on board we will thee lift.
No : I may not enter there.
Wherefore so ? 'Tis Jove's decree,
In a bowl Care may not be ;
In a bowl Care may not be.

Fear ye not the waves that roll ?
No : in charmed bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl ?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine ;
And your ballast is old wine.

This catch was so well executed by the spirit and science of Mr. Hilary, and the deep triune voice of the reverend gentleman, that the whole party, in spite of themselves, caught the contagion, and joined in chorus at the conclusion, each raising a bumper to his lips :

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The bowl goes trim : the moon doth shine :
And our ballast is old wine.

Mr. Cypress, having his ballast on board, stepped, the same evening, into his bowl, or travelling chariot, and departed to rake seas and rivers, lakes and canals, for the moon of ideal beauty.

CHAPTER XII

IT was the custom of the Honourable Mr. Listless, on adjourning from the bottle to the ladies, to retire for a few moments to make a second toilette, that he might present himself in becoming taste. Fatout, attending as usual, appeared with a countenance of great dismay, and informed his master that he had just ascertained that the abbey was haunted. Mrs. Hilary's *gentlewoman*, for whom Fatout had lately conceived a *tendresse*, had been, as she expressed it, 'fritted out of her seventeen senses' the preceding night, as she was retiring to her bedchamber, by a ghastly figure which she had met stalking along one of the galleries, wrapped in a white shroud, with a bloody turban on its head. She had fainted away with fear; and, when she recovered, she found herself in the dark, and the figure was gone. '*Sacre—cochon—bleu!*' exclaimed Fatout, giving very deliberate emphasis to every portion of his terrible oath—'I would not meet de *revenant*, de ghost—*non*—not for all de *bowl-de-ponch* in de world.'

'Fatout,' said the Honourable Mr. Listless, 'did I ever see a ghost?'

'*Jamais*, monsieur, never.'

'Then I hope I never shall, for, in the present shattered state of my nerves, I am afraid it would be too much for me. There—loosen the lace of my stays a little, for really this plebeian practice of eating—Not too loose—consider my shape. That will do. And I desire that you bring me no more stories of ghosts; for, though I do not believe in such things, yet, when one is awake in the night, one is apt, if one thinks of them, to have fancies that give one a kind of a chill, particularly if one opens one's eyes suddenly on one's dressing gown, hanging in the moonlight, between the bed and the window.'

The Honourable Mr. Listless, though he had prohibited Fatout from bringing him any more stories of ghosts, could not help thinking of that which Fatout had already brought; and, as it was uppermost in his mind when he descended to the tea and coffee cups, and the rest of the company in the library, he almost involuntarily asked Mr. Flosky, whom he looked up to as a most oraculous personage, whether any story of any ghost that had ever appeared to any one was entitled to any degree of belief.

Mr. Flosky. By far the greater number, to a very great degree.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Really, that is very alarming!

Mr. Flosky. *Sunt gemina somni portæ.* There are two gates through which ghosts find their way to the upper air: fraud and self-delusion. In the latter case, a ghost is a *deceptio visûs*, an ocular spectrum, an idea with the force of a sensation. I have seen many ghosts myself. I daresay there are few in this company who have not seen a ghost.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. I am happy to say, I never have, for one.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. We have such high authority for ghosts, that it is rank scepticism to disbelieve them. Job saw a ghost, which came for the express purpose of asking a question, and did not wait for an answer.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. Because Job was too frightened to give one.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. Spectres appeared to the Egyptians during the darkness with which Moses covered Egypt. The witch of Endor raised the ghost of Samuel. Moses and Elias appeared on Mount Tabor. An evil spirit was sent into the army of Sennacherib, and exterminated it in a single night.

Mr. Toobad. Saying, The devil is come among you, having great wrath.

Mr. Flosky. Saint Macarius interrogated a skull, which was found in the desert, and made it relate, in presence of several witnesses, what was going forward in hell. Saint Martin of Tours, being jealous of a pretended martyr, who was the rival saint of his neighbourhood, called up his ghost, and made him confess that he was damned. Saint Germain, being on his travels, turned out of an inn a large party of ghosts,

who had every night taken possession of the *table d'hôte*, and consumed a copious supper.

Mr. Hilary. Jolly ghosts and no doubt all friars. A similar party took possession of the cellar of M. Swebach, the painter, in Paris, drank his wine, and threw the empty bottles at his head.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. An atrocious act.

Mr. Flosky. Pausanias relates, that the neighing of horses and the tumult of combatants were heard every night on the field of Marathon : that those who went purposely to hear these sounds suffered severely for their curiosity ; but those who heard them by accident passed with impunity.

The Reverend Mr. Larynx. I once saw a ghost myself, in my study, which is the last place where any one but a ghost would look for me. I had not been into it for three months, and was going to consult Tillotson, when, on opening the door, I saw a venerable figure in a flannel dressing gown, sitting in my arm chair, and reading my Jeremy Taylor. It vanished in a moment, and so did I ; and what it was or what it wanted I have never been able to ascertain.

Mr. Flosky.—It was an idea with the force of a sensation. It is seldom that ghosts appeal to two senses at once ; but, when I was in Devonshire, the following story was well attested to me. A young woman, whose lover was at sea, returning one evening over some solitary fields, saw her lover sitting on a stile over which she was to pass. Her first emotions were surprise and joy, but there was a paleness and seriousness in his face that made them give place to alarm. She advanced towards him, and he said to her, in a solemn voice, ‘The eye that hath seen me shall see me no more. Thine eye is upon me, but I am not.’ And with these words he vanished ; and on that very day and hour, as it afterwards appeared, he had perished by shipwreck.

The whole party now drew round in a circle, and each related some ghostly anecdote, heedless of the flight of time, till, in a pause of the conversation, they heard the hollow tongue of midnight sounding twelve.

Mr. Hilary.—All these anecdotes admit of solution on psychological principles. It is more easy for a soldier, a philosopher, or even a saint, to be frightened at his own shadow, than for a dead man to come out of his grave. Medical writers



'A ghastly figure, shrouded in white drapery, with the semblance of a bloody turban on its head, entered and stalked slowly up the apartment.'

cite a thousand singular examples of the force of imagination. Persons of feeble, nervous, melancholy temperament, exhausted by fever, by labour, or by spare diet, will readily conjure up, in the magic ring of their own phantasy, spectres, gorgons, chimæras, and all the objects of their hatred and their love. We are most of us like Don Quixote, to whom a windmill was a giant, and Dulcinea a magnificent princess : all more or less the dupes of our own imagination, though we do not all go so far as to see ghosts, or to fancy ourselves pipkins and teapots.

Mr. Flosky. I can safely say I have seen too many ghosts myself to believe in their external existence. I have seen all kinds of ghosts : black spirits and white, red spirits and grey. Some in the shapes of venerable old men, who have met me in my rambles at noon ; some of beautiful young women, who have peeped through my curtains at midnight.

The Honourable Mr. Listless. And have proved, I doubt not, 'palpable to feeling as to sight.'

Mr. Flosky. By no means, sir. You reflect upon my purity. Myself and my friends, particularly my friend Mr. Sackbut, are famous for our purity. No, sir, genuine untangible ghosts. I live in a world of ghosts. I see a ghost at this moment.

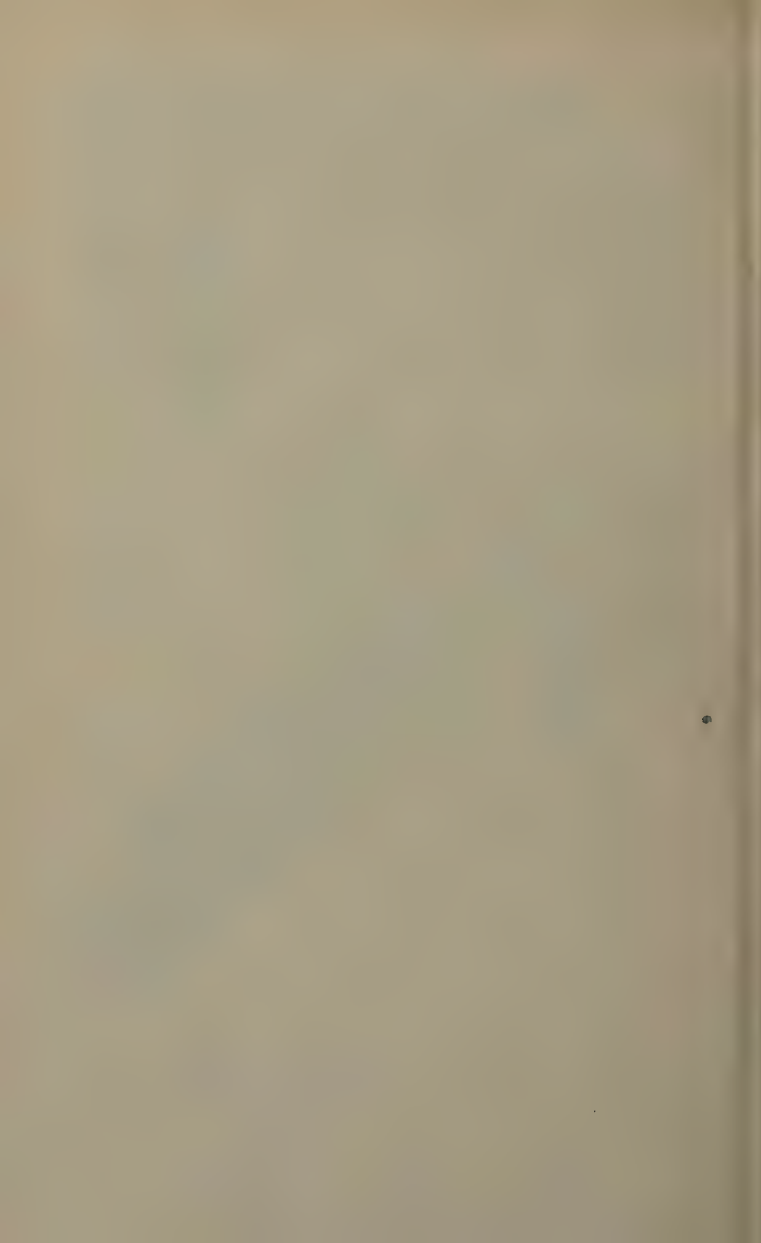
Mr. Flosky fixed his eyes on a door at the farther end of the library. The company looked in the same direction. The door silently opened, and a ghastly figure, shrouded in white drapery, with the semblance of a bloody turban on its head, entered and stalked slowly up the apartment. Mr. Flosky, familiar as he was with ghosts, was not prepared for this apparition, and made the best of his way out at the opposite door. Mrs. Hilary and Marionetta followed, screaming. The Honourable Mr. Listless, by two turns of his body, rolled first off the sofa and then under it. The Reverend Mr. Larynx leaped up and fled with so much precipitation, that he overturned the table on the foot of Mr. Glowry. Mr. Glowry roared with pain in the ear of Mr. Toobad. Mr. Toobad's alarm so bewildered his senses, that, missing the door, he threw up one of the windows, jumped out in his panic, and plunged over head and ears in the moat. Mr. Asterias and his son, who were on the watch for their mermaid, were attracted by the splashing, threw a net over him, and dragged him to land.

Scythrop and Mr. Hilary meanwhile had hastened to his

assistance, and, on arriving at the edge of the moat, followed by several servants with ropes and torches, found Mr. Asterias and Aquarius busy in endeavouring to extricate Mr. Toobad from the net, who was entangled in the meshes, and floundering with rage. Scythrop was lost in amazement ; but Mr. Hilary saw, at one view, all the circumstances of the adventure, and burst into an immoderate fit of laughter ; on recovering from which, he said to Mr. Asterias, ‘ You have caught an odd fish, indeed.’ Mr. Toobad was highly exasperated at this unseasonable pleasantry ; but Mr. Hilary softened his anger, by producing a knife, and cutting the Gordian knot of his reticular envelopment. ‘ You see,’ said Mr. Toobad, ‘ you see, gentlemen, in my unfortunate person proof upon proof of the present dominion of the devil in the affairs of this world ; and I have no doubt but that the apparition of this night was Apollyon himself in disguise, sent for the express purpose of terrifying me into this complication of misadventures. The devil is come among you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’



'Mr. Asterias and his son, who were on the watch for their mermaid, were attracted by the splashing, threw a net over him, and dragged him to land.'



CHAPTER XIII

MR. GLOWRY was much surprised, on occasionally visiting Scythrop's tower, to find the door always locked, and to be kept sometimes waiting many minutes for admission; during which he invariably heard a heavy rolling sound like that of a ponderous mangle, or of a waggon on a weighing-bridge, or of theatrical thunder.

He took little notice of this for some time: at length his curiosity was excited, and, one day, instead of knocking at the door, as usual, the instant he reached it he applied his ear to the keyhole, and like Bottom, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'spied a voice,' which he guessed to be of the feminine gender, and knew to be not Scythrop's, whose deeper tones he distinguished at intervals. Having attempted in vain to catch a syllable of the discourse, he knocked violently at the door, and roared for immediate admission. The voices ceased, the accustomed rolling sound was heard, the door opened, and Scythrop was discovered alone. Mr. Glowry looked round to every corner of the apartment, and then said, 'Where is the lady?'

'The lady, sir?' said Scythrop.

'Yes, sir, the lady.'

'Sir, I do not understand you.'

'You don't, sir?'

'No, indeed, sir. There is no lady here.'

'But, sir, this is not the only apartment in the tower, and I make no doubt there is a lady upstairs.'

'You are welcome to search, sir.'

'Yes, and while I am searching, she will slip out from some lurking place, and make her escape.'

'You may lock this door, sir, and take the key with you.'

‘But there is the terrace door: she has escaped by the terrace.’

‘The terrace, sir, has no other outlet, and the walls are too high for a lady to jump down.’

‘Well, sir, give me the key.’

Mr. Glowry took the key, searched every nook of the tower, and returned.

‘You are a fox, Scythrop; you are an exceedingly cunning fox, with that demure visage of yours. What was that lumbering sound I heard before you opened the door?’

‘Sound, sir?’

‘Yes, sir, sound.’

‘My dear sir, I am not aware of any sound, except my great table, which I moved on rising to let you in.’

‘The table!—let me see that. No, sir; not a tenth part heavy enough, not a tenth part.’

‘But, sir, you do not consider the laws of acoustics: a whisper becomes a peal of thunder in the focus of reverberation. Allow me to explain this: sounds striking on concave surfaces are reflected from them, and, after reflection, converge to points which are the foci of these surfaces. It follows, therefore, that the ear may be so placed in one, as that it shall hear a sound better than when situated nearer to the point of the first impulse: again, in the case of two concave surfaces placed opposite to each other——’

‘Nonsense, sir. Don’t tell me of foci. Pray, sir, will concave surfaces produce two voices when nobody speaks? I heard two voices, and one was feminine; feminine, sir: what say you to that?’

‘Oh, sir, I perceive your mistake: I am writing a tragedy, and was acting over a scene to myself. To convince you, I will give you a specimen; but you must first understand the plot. It is a tragedy on the German model. The Great Mogul is in exile, and has taken lodgings at Kensington, with his only daughter, the Princess Rantroirina, who takes in needlework, and keeps a day school. *The princess is discovered hemming a set of shirts for the parson of the parish: they are to be marked with a large R. Enter to her the Great Mogul. A pause, during which they look at each other expressively. The princess changes colour several times. The Mogul takes snuff in great agitation. Several grains are heard to*



'He applied his ear to the keyhole, and like Bottom, in the Midsummer Night's Dream, "spied a voice."

fall on the stage. His heart is seen to beat through his upper benjamin.—THE MOGUL (with a mournful look at his left shoe). “My shoe-string is broken.”—THE PRINCESS (after an interval of melancholy reflection). “I know it.”—THE MOGUL. “My second shoe-string! The first broke when I lost my empire: the second has broken to-day. When will my poor heart break?”—THE PRINCESS. “Shoe-strings, hearts, and empires! Mysterious sympathy!”

‘Nonsense, sir,’ interrupted Mr. Glowry. ‘That is not at all like the voice I heard.’

‘But, sir,’ said Scythrop, ‘a keyhole may be so constructed as to act like an acoustic tube, and an acoustic tube, sir, will modify sound in a very remarkable manner. Consider the construction of the ear, and the nature and causes of sound. The external part of the ear is a cartilaginous funnel.’

‘It won’t do, Scythrop. There is a girl concealed in this tower, and find her I will. There are such things as sliding panels and secret closets.’—He sounded round the room with his cane, but detected no hollowness.—‘I have heard, sir,’ he continued, ‘that during my absence, two years ago, you had a dumb carpenter closeted with you day after day. I did not dream that you were laying contrivances for carrying on secret intrigues. Young men will have their way: I had my way when I was a young man: but, sir, when your cousin Marionetta——’

Scythrop now saw that the affair was growing serious. To have clapped his hand upon his father’s mouth, to have entreated him to be silent, would, in the first place, not have made him so; and, in the second, would have shown a dread of being overheard by somebody. His only resource, therefore, was to try to drown Mr. Glowry’s voice; and, having no other subject, he continued (his description of the ear), raising his voice continually as Mr. Glowry raised his.

‘When your cousin Marionetta,’ said Mr. Glowry, ‘whom you profess to love—whom you profess to love, sir——’

‘The internal canal of the ear,’ said Scythrop, ‘is partly bony and partly cartilaginous. This internal canal is——’

‘Is actually in the house, sir; and, when you are so shortly to be—as I expect——’

‘Closed at the further end by the *membrana tympani*——’

‘Joined together in holy matrimony——’

‘Under which is carried a branch of the fifth pair of nerves——’

‘I say, sir, when you are so shortly to be married to your cousin Marionetta——’

‘The *cavitas tympani*——’

A loud noise was heard behind the book-case, which, to the astonishment of Mr. Glowry, opened in the middle, and the massy compartments, with all their weight of books, receding from each other in the manner of a theatrical scene, with a heavy rolling sound (which Mr. Glowry immediately recognised to be the same which had excited his curiosity), disclosed an interior apartment, in the entrance of which stood the beautiful Stella, who, stepping forward, exclaimed, ‘Married! Is he going to be married? The profligate!’

‘Really, madam,’ said Mr. Glowry, ‘I do not know what he is going to do, or what I am going to do, or what any one is going to do; for all this is incomprehensible.’

‘I can explain it all,’ said Scythrop, ‘in a most satisfactory manner, if you will but have the goodness to leave us alone.’

‘Pray, sir, to which act of the tragedy of the Great Mogul does this incident belong?’

‘I entreat you, my dear sir, leave us alone.’

Stella threw herself into a chair, and burst into a tempest of tears. Scythrop sat down by her, and took her hand. She snatched her hand away, and turned her back upon him. He rose, sat down on the other side, and took her other hand. She snatched it away, and turned from him again. Scythrop continued entreating Mr. Glowry to leave them alone; but the old gentleman was obstinate, and would not go.

‘I suppose, after all,’ said Mr. Glowry maliciously, ‘it is only a phenomenon in acoustics, and this young lady is a reflection of sound from concave surfaces.’

Some one tapped at the door: Mr. Glowry opened it, and Mr. Hilary entered. He had been seeking Mr. Glowry, and had traced him to Scythrop’s tower. He stood a few moments in silent surprise, and then addressed himself to Mr. Glowry for an explanation.

‘The explanation,’ said Mr. Glowry, ‘is very satisfactory. The Great Mogul has taken lodgings at Kensington, and the external part of the ear is a cartilaginous funnel.’



'Sev'rop flew to her assistance; and Stella with redoubled anger sprang towards the door, but was intercepted in her intended flight by being caught in the arms of Mr. Toobad.'

‘Mr. Glowry, that is no explanation.’

‘Mr. Hilary, it is all I know about the matter.’

‘Sir, this pleasantry is very unseasonable. I perceive that my niece is sported with in a most unjustifiable manner, and I shall see if she will be more successful in obtaining an intelligible answer.’ And he departed in search of Marionetta.

Scythrop was now in a hopeful predicament. Mr. Hilary made a hue and cry in the abbey, and summoned his wife and Marionetta to Scythrop’s apartment. The ladies, not knowing what was the matter, hastened in great consternation. Mr. Toobad saw them sweeping along the corridor, and judging from their manner that the devil had manifested his wrath in some new shape, followed from pure curiosity.

Scythrop meanwhile vainly endeavoured to get rid of Mr. Glowry and to pacify Stella. The latter attempted to escape from the tower, declaring she would leave the abbey immediately, and he should never see her or hear of her more. Scythrop held her hand and detained her by force, till Mr. Hilary reappeared with Mrs. Hilary and Marionetta. Marionetta, seeing Scythrop grasping the hand of a strange beauty, fainted away in the arms of her aunt. Scythrop flew to her assistance; and Stella with redoubled anger sprang towards the door, but was intercepted in her intended flight by being caught in the arms of Mr. Toobad, who exclaimed—
‘Celinda!’

‘Papa!’ said the young lady disconsolately.

‘The devil is come among you,’ said Mr. Toobad; ‘how came my daughter here?’

‘Your daughter!’ exclaimed Mr. Glowry.

‘Your daughter!’ exclaimed Scythrop and Mr. and Mrs. Hilary.

‘Yes,’ said Mr. Toobad, ‘my daughter Celinda.’

Marionetta opened her eyes and fixed them on Celinda; Celinda in return fixed hers on Marionetta. They were at remote points of the apartment. Scythrop was equidistant from both of them, central and motionless, like Mahomet’s coffin.

‘Mr. Glowry,’ said Mr. Toobad, ‘can you tell by what means my daughter came here?’

‘I know no more,’ said Mr. Glowry, ‘than the Great Mogul.’

‘Mr. Scythrop,’ said Mr. Toobad, ‘how came my daughter here?’

‘I did not know, sir, that the lady was your daughter.’

‘But how came she here?’

‘By spontaneous locomotion,’ said Scythrop, sullenly.

‘Celinda,’ said Mr. Toobad, ‘what does all this mean?’

‘I really do not know, sir.’

‘This is most unaccountable. When I told you in London that I had chosen a husband for you, you thought proper to run away from him; and now, to all appearance, you have run away to him.’

‘How, sir! was that your choice?’

‘Precisely; and if he is yours too we shall be both of a mind, for the first time in our lives.’

‘He is not my choice, sir. This lady has a prior claim: I renounce him.’

‘And I renounce him,’ said Marionetta.

Scythrop knew not what to do. He could not attempt to conciliate the one without irreparably offending the other; and he was so fond of both, that the idea of depriving himself for ever of the society of either was intolerable to him: he therefore retreated into his stronghold, mystery; maintained an impenetrable silence; and contented himself with stealing occasionally a deprecating glance at each of the objects of his idolatry. Mr. Toobad and Mr. Hilary, in the meantime, were each insisting on an explanation from Mr. Glowry, who they thought had been playing a double game on this occasion. Mr. Glowry was vainly endeavouring to persuade them of his innocence in the whole transaction. Mrs. Hilary was endeavouring to mediate between her husband and brother. The Honourable Mr. Listless, the Reverend Mr. Larnyx, Mr. Flosky, Mr. Asterias, and Aquarius, were attracted by the tumult to the scene of action, and were appealed to severally and conjointly by the respective disputants. Multitudinous questions, and answers *en masse*, composed a *charivari*, to which the genius of Rossini alone could have given a suitable accompaniment, and which was only terminated by Mrs. Hilary and Mr. Toobad retreating with the captive damsels. The whole party followed, with the exception of Scythrop, who threw himself into his arm-chair, crossed his left foot over his right knee, placed the hollow of his left hand on the interior ankle of his

left leg, rested his right elbow on the elbow of the chair, placed the ball of his right thumb against his right temple, curved the forefinger along the upper part of his forehead, rested the point of the middle finger on the bridge of his nose, and the points of the two others on the lower part of the palm, fixed his eyes intently on the veins in the back of his left hand, and sat in this position like the immovable Theseus, who, as is well known to many who have not been at college, and to some few who have, *sedet, æternumque sedebit*.¹ We hope the admirers of the *minutiæ* in poetry and romance will appreciate this accurate description of a pensive attitude.

¹ Sits, and will sit for ever.

CHAPTER XIV

SCYTHROP was still in this position when Raven entered to announce that dinner was on table.

‘I cannot come,’ said Scythrop.

Raven sighed. ‘Something is the matter,’ said Raven: ‘but man is born to trouble.’

‘Leave me,’ said Scythrop; ‘go, and croak elsewhere.’

‘Thus it is,’ said Raven. ‘Five-and-twenty years have I lived in Nightmare Abbey, and now all the reward of my affection is—Go, and croak elsewhere. I have danced you on my knee, and fed you with marrow.’

‘Good Raven,’ said Scythrop, ‘I entreat you to leave me.’

‘Shall I bring your dinner here?’ said Raven. ‘A boiled fowl and a glass of Madeira are prescribed by the faculty in cases of low spirits. But you had better join the party: it is very much reduced already.’

‘Reduced! how?’

‘The Honourable Mr. Listless is gone. He declared that, what with family quarrels in the morning, and ghosts at night, he could get neither sleep nor peace; and that the agitation was too much for his nerves: though Mr. Glowry assured him that the ghost was only poor Crow walking in his sleep, and that the shroud and bloody turban were a sheet and a red nightcap.’

‘Well, sir?’

‘The Reverend Mr. Larynx has been called off on duty, to marry or bury (I don’t know which) some unfortunate person or persons, at Claydyke: but man is born to trouble!’

‘Is that all?’

‘No. Mr. Toobad is gone too, and a strange lady with him.’

‘Gone!’

‘Gone. And Mr. and Mrs. Hilary, and Miss O’Carroll : they are all gone. There is nobody left but Mr. Asterias and his son, and they are going to-night.’

‘Then I have lost them both.’

‘Won’t you come to dinner?’

‘No.’

‘Shall I bring your dinner here?’

‘Yes.’

‘What will you have?’

‘A pint of port and a pistol.’¹

‘A pistol!’

‘And a pint of port. I will make my exit like Werter. Go. Stay. Did Miss O’Carroll say anything?’

‘No.’

‘Did Miss Toobad say anything?’

‘The strange lady? No.’

‘Did either of them cry?’

‘No.’

‘What did they do?’

‘Nothing.’

‘What did Mr. Toobad say?’

‘He said, fifty times over, the devil was come among us.’

‘And they are gone?’

‘Yes ; and the dinner is getting cold. There is a time for everything under the sun. You may as well dine first, and be miserable afterwards.’

‘True, Raven. There is something in that. I will take your advice : therefore, bring me——’

‘The port and the pistol?’

‘No ; the boiled fowl and Madeira.’

‘Scythrop had dined, and was sipping his Madeira alone, immersed in melancholy musing, when Mr. Glowry entered, followed by Raven, who, having placed an additional glass and set a chair for Mr. Glowry, withdrew. Mr. Glowry sat down opposite Scythrop. After a pause, during which each filled and drank in silence, Mr. Glowry said, ‘So, sir, you have played your cards well. I proposed Miss Toobad to you : you refused her. Mr. Toobad proposed you to her : she refused you. You fell in love with Marionetta, and were going to

¹ See *The Sorrows of Werter*, Letter 93.

NIGHTMARE ABBEY

poison yourself, because, from pure fatherly regard to your temporal interests, I withheld my consent. When, at length, I offered you my consent, you told me I was too precipitate. And, after all, I find you and Miss Toobad living together in the same tower, and behaving in every respect like two plighted lovers. Now, sir, if there be any rational solution of all this absurdity, I shall be very much obliged to you for a small glimmering of information.'

'The solution, sir, is of little moment; but I will leave it in writing for your satisfaction. The crisis of my fate is come; the world is a stage, and my direction is *crit*.'

'Do not talk so, sir;—do not talk so, Scythrop. What would you have?'

'I would have my love.'

'And pray, sir, who is your love?'

'Celinda—Marionetta—either—both.'

'Both! That may do very well in a German tragedy; and the Great Mogul might have found it very feasible in his lodgings at Kensington; but it will not do in Lincolnshire. Will you have Miss Toobad?'

'Yes.'

'And renounce Marionetta?'

'No.'

'But you must renounce one.'

'I cannot.'

'And you cannot have both. What is to be done?'

'I must shoot myself.'

'Don't talk so, Scythrop. Be rational, my dear Scythrop. Consider, and make a cool, calm choice, and I will exert myself in your behalf.

'Why should I choose, sir? Both have renounced *me*: I have no hope of either.'

'Tell me which you will have, and I will plead your cause irresistibly.'

'Well, sir,—I will have—no, sir, I cannot renounce either. I cannot choose either. I am doomed to be the victim of eternal disappointments; and I have no resource but a pistol.'

'Scythrop—Scythrop;—if one of them should come to you—what then?'

'That, sir, might alter the case: but that cannot be.'

'It can be, Scythrop; it will be: I promise you it will

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be. Have but a little patience—but a week's patience—and it shall be.'

'A week, sir, is an age: but, to oblige you, as a last act of filial duty, I will live another week. It is now Thursday evening, twenty-five minutes past seven. At this hour and minute, on Thursday next, love and fate shall smile on me, or I will drink my last pint of port in this world.'

Mr. Glowry ordered his travelling chariot, and departed from the abbey

CHAPTER XV

THE day after Mr. Glowry's departure was one of incessant rain, and Scythrop repented of the promise he had given. The next day was one of bright sunshine: he sat on the terrace, read a tragedy of Sophocles, and was not sorry, when Raven announced dinner, to find himself alive. On the third evening, the wind blew, and the rain beat, and the owl flapped against his windows; and he put a new flint in his pistol. On the fourth day, the sun shone again; and he locked the pistol up in a drawer, where he left it undisturbed till the morning of the eventful Thursday, when he ascended the turret with a telescope, and spied anxiously along the road that crossed the fens from Claydyke: but nothing appeared on it. He watched in this manner from ten A.M. till Raven summoned him to dinner at five; when he stationed Crow at the telescope, and descended to his own funeral-feast. He left open the communications between the tower and turret, and called aloud at intervals to Crow,—‘Crow, Crow, is anything coming?’ Crow answered, ‘The wind blows, and the windmills turn, but I see nothing coming’; and at every answer, Scythrop found the necessity of raising his spirits with a bumper. After dinner, he gave Raven his watch to set by the abbey clock. Raven brought it, Scythrop placed it on the table, and Raven departed. Scythrop called again to Crow; and Crow, who had fallen asleep, answered mechanically, ‘I see nothing coming.’ Scythrop laid his pistol between his watch and his bottle. The hour-hand passed the VII.—the minute-hand moved on;—it was within three minutes of the appointed time. Scythrop called again to Crow. Crow answered as before. Scythrop rang the bell: Raven appeared.

‘Raven,’ said Scythrop, ‘the clock is too fast.’



"*Villain!*" said Scythrop, pointing the pistol at him; "*it is too fast!*"

‘No, indeed,’ said Raven, who knew nothing of Scythrop’s intentions; ‘if anything, it is too slow.’

‘Villain!’ said Scythrop, pointing the pistol at him; ‘it is too fast.’

‘Yes—yes—too fast, I meant,’ said Raven, in manifest fear.

‘How much too fast?’ said Scythrop.

‘As much as you please,’ said Raven.

‘How much, I say,’ said Scythrop, pointing the pistol again.

‘An hour, a full hour, sir,’ said the terrified butler.

‘Put back my watch,’ said Scythrop.

Raven, with trembling hand, was putting back the watch, when the rattle of wheels was heard in the court; and Scythrop, springing down the stairs by three steps together, was at the door in sufficient time to have handed either of the young ladies from the carriage, if she had happened to be in it; but Mr. Glowry was alone.

‘I rejoice to see you,’ said Mr. Glowry; ‘I was fearful of being too late, for I waited to the last moment in the hope of accomplishing my promise; but all my endeavours have been vain, as these letters will show.’

Scythrop impatiently broke the seals. The contents were these:—

‘Almost a stranger in England, I fled from parental tyranny, and the dread of an arbitrary marriage, to the protection of a stranger and a philosopher, whom I expected to find something better than, or at least something different from, the rest of his worthless species. Could I, after what has occurred, have expected nothing more from you than the commonplace impertinence of sending your father to treat with me, and with mine, for me? I should be a little moved in your favour, if I could believe you capable of carrying into effect the resolutions which your father says you have taken, in the event of my proving inflexible; though I doubt not you will execute them, as far as relates to the pint of wine, twice over, at least. I wish you much happiness with Miss O’Carroll. I shall always cherish a grateful recollection of Nightmare Abbey, for having been the means of introducing me to a true transcendentalist; and, though he is a little older than myself, which is all one in Germany, I shall very soon have the pleasure of subscribing myself

‘CELINDA FLOSKY.’

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‘I hope, my dear cousin, that you will not be angry with me, but that you will always think of me as a sincere friend, who will always feel interested in your welfare ; I am sure you love Miss Toobad much better than me, and I wish you much happiness with her. Mr. Listless assures me that people do not kill themselves for love nowadays, though it is still the fashion to talk about it. I shall, in a very short time, change my name and situation, and shall always be happy to see you in Berkeley Square, when, to the unalterable designation of your affectionate cousin, I shall subjoin the signature of

‘MARIONETTA LISTLESS.’

Scythrop tore both the letters to atoms, and railed in good set terms against the fickleness of women.

‘Calm yourself, my dear Scythrop,’ said Mr. Glowry ; ‘there are yet maidens in England.’

‘Very true, sir,’ said Scythrop.

‘And the next time,’ said Mr. Glowry, ‘have but one string to your bow.’

‘Very good advice, sir,’ said Scythrop.

‘And, besides,’ said Mr. Glowry, ‘the fatal time is past, for it is now almost eight.’

‘Then that villain, Raven,’ said Scythrop, ‘deceived me when he said that the clock was too fast ; but, as you observe very justly, the time has gone by, and I have just reflected that these repeated crosses in love qualify me to take a very advanced degree in misanthropy ; and there is, therefore, good hope that I may make a figure in the world. But I shall ring for the rascal Raven, and admonish him.’

Raven appeared. Scythrop looked at him very fiercely two or three minutes ; and Raven, still remembering the pistol, stood quaking in mute apprehension, till Scythrop, pointing significantly towards the dining-room, said, ‘Bring some Madeira.’

THE END

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